

EXPLORING THE FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE AND ISLAMIC PRACTICES IN MUSLIM
IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

By

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As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by *Noura Alhudaib*, titled *Exploring the Funds of Knowledge and Islamic Practices in Muslim Immigrant Families* and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



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As a simple Saudi woman who came from one of the largest Muslim countries in the world, I wanted to prove to my country by considering how Saudi women can create change and improve their country. By believing in education, everything can change for the better in the world. I believe God (Allah) sent me to the University of Arizona to study and to explore the western world of education. Funds of knowledge, a theory developed by Dr. Gonzalez, Dr. Moll and Dr. Amanti, inspired my knowledge and research. I want to take the time to acknowledge my faculty members who supported me during my journey in this program. Dr. Kathy Short, my head chair, encouraged me to work and study with passion in order to reach my goal. She guided me in different and novel directions, supporting my goals throughout. Dr. Leah Duran, my co-chair, with whom I took three classes, always understood my circumstances as a Saudi Arabian woman. She taught with excitement and with a rigor that nurtured my love for education. I want to thank Dr. Perry Gilmore also, who taught me that we are not scholars but perpetual learners and our teachers are the children. And lastly, from Dr. Jill Koyama, I learned how a woman, even a woman from Saudi Arabia, could be a leader in the educational system.

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Dedication

**To every child learning in the world from every socioeconomic class, I am also learning
from you.**

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Abstract

The concept of funds of knowledge is based on a simple premise: people have knowledge and their life experiences are what give them that knowledge. Researchers of funds of knowledge focus on understanding the details, the processes of life and lived experiences of people. This study explores to learn about the funds of knowledge of Muslim immigrant families through home visits and family story backpacks. I wanted to identify the kinds of funds of knowledge incorporated into their households to help gain more comprehension about the families' histories and backgrounds. Moreover, I wanted to consider the implications for how families' funds of knowledge can impact the classroom culture and the learning of students. Analysis indicated that the value of education, the significance of family relationships, maintenance of maternal tongue, deference to other cultures, and the continuation of religious practices were all fundamental components of the Muslim immigrants' funds of knowledge. I learned that they were all rooted in the religion of Islam. The funds of knowledge present in Muslim immigrant families greatly contributes to their knowledge in the classroom and educators benefit from learning these funds and applying them to the curriculum.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The purpose of this research is to study how to introduce funds of knowledge as a theoretical and practical framework in schools. I wanted to learn about the funds of knowledge of Muslim immigrant families through home visits and family story backpacks. I wanted to identify the kinds of funds of knowledge incorporated into their households to help gain more comprehension about the families' histories and backgrounds. Moreover, I wanted to consider the implications for how families' funds of knowledge can impact the classroom culture and the learning of students. This allowed me to reflect more on the connections between students' learning and funds of knowledge in the classroom. Finally, the relationship between home, classroom, and students was also important. I wanted to have an idea of what could be learned as a scholar from families, especially in considering implications for Saudi Arabia.

The intent of this research is to be presented to leaders, policymakers and teachers in the Saudi Arabian educational system. For the past 9 years, the educational system in Saudi Arabia has seen some positive changes, especially with King Salman. Policy makers realize how our educational system needs to include community, home, and school cooperation to build bridges between these stakeholders. Also, Saudi Arabia has the "Vision 2030" in which the government emphasizes improvements in education that include considering international curricula. By applying funds of knowledge, this research provides an opportunity to understand the kind of knowledge students can bring from their lives outside of school, and to build the curriculum with this knowledge.

The current situation in the educational system in Saudi Arabia exhibits gaps or disconnects between home, school, and community. As a result, issues have arisen because the curriculum is set, inflexible, created by policy makers who are far from the classroom, with a

focus on one-size-fits-all. The mindset dictates that students are to receive this curriculum, or knowledge, with little connection to their lives. There is also little regard for the differences in cultural backgrounds across groups within Saudi Arabia. My purpose in studying funds of knowledge is to help break the wall between school, home, and community, once I return to Saudi Arabia. As a learner, I believe each child has a unique background and knowledge that is generational and based in community. Teachers and educators should focus on determining what knowledge the student brings to school and also recognize the differences in our cultures. When this information is added to the curriculum, it better prepares students for their future when they are faced with different cultures and new practices.

I want to consider the implications of the funds of knowledge theory and how it can be applied to the education system in Saudi Arabia. This theory has been successfully adapted in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain and this encourages me to consider how it might improve our system by helping students to engage by applying their knowledge into the curriculum. We need to develop our own funds of knowledge practices that are culturally appropriate in the Saudi context. My overall goal is to match this study with “Vision 2030.” When I read proposals in “Vision 2030” as it applies to K-12 curriculum, they identify their objectives but do not have a tool or methodology to reach their goal. Funds of knowledge could be the key to changing the current mindset to one that matches “Vision 2030.”

My History as a Learner and Educator

As a scholar who grew up in an educated family with teachers for parents, I realized that education was very important at an early age. My extended family, including most of my aunts, uncles, and cousins are either currently teachers or previously were. I am the third daughter of nine children who are all female. All of my sisters and I have reached a high level of academic

achievement in our lives. All nine of us have at least a bachelor's degree. As a Saudi woman growing up in a conservative Saudi society, my parents were fairly open-minded. They encouraged me to travel to the United States with my then-husband and children to study. My family especially encouraged my ex-husband to attain a higher level of education during this trip to the US. He only had a high-school equivalent degree from the KSA and they felt he was not educated enough. After our divorce, I faced problems with some family members who believe that women need a male guardian or spouse to lead them and make decisions for them. However, I was able to push through these challenges to overcome and continue my education despite our circumstances. In Saudi society, some people believe that it is better for women to stay at home and don't believe that women can be independent. I believe otherwise.

As a child, the entire extended family often gathered at my grandmother's house. Because all my family members are teachers or students, most of the topics of discussion related to education and school. I overheard them most of the time, but did not realize that I was passively absorbing the significance of education into my brain. Since education is highly valued in my family, it is a fund of knowledge. This is why I chose a doctoral program in education in the United States. As a child, the educational system was not enough for me. I was always wondering about the curriculum and the system because there was a large gap between how we were living our lives and what I was learning in school. I also wondered why the Ministry of Education was not changing the curriculum to narrow this gap and make education more practical. The content of the curriculum did not change between the time my older sister had it and the time I had it seven years later. My mother encouraged us to learn new things despite this and she was so dedicated that she taught us every day after school when we got home. My father also had a big role in our education. He encouraged us by giving us each a gift after each

semester. Throughout my journey in school, I continued to feel dissatisfied with the content of the curriculum and how little I could apply to my own life.

Before I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Saudi Arabia, my internship involved teaching a high-school biology class. I was not happy with the strategy that I was required to use. I knew that I could do more than what I was being asked, but the situations and the rules did not allow for this. In addition, the structure of the administration in the school was gender-segregated. It was complicated to learn how the system worked and how to change things as a female teacher. Because of that, I stopped teaching for a year and worked in marketing despite the fact that I loved teaching. Things began to change for me when I moved to the US with my family to study English.

As a parent, I had chance to teach my children in the US and to help them understand how important education is in our lives. My ex-husband would often devalue education, likely because his whole family was not school-educated, but this only motivated me to further my education. This is why I consider my doctoral work to be a new fund of knowledge for myself and my family, one that I hope to pass down to my children.

I chose the theory of funds of knowledge to be the base of my research. This is because I have long known that the main problem with the educational system in Saudi Arabia is the gap between the school, community and family life. I think I implicitly knew about this theory even before I learned about it at the University of Arizona, but I did not know how to talk about it. When I came to the US and learned about funds of knowledge as a theory, I was thrilled to find that there was an official name for something that I had already been thinking about for years. I learned how it worked as a theory and what tangible strategies could be used to bring funds of knowledge to the curriculum and to the school system.

Some Saudi scholars believed, long back, that there was lots of room for improvement of the Saudi curriculum and the educational system. They wanted to help bridge the gap that I too had identified, but they did not know how. By bringing funds of knowledge to our educational system, especially in tandem with the goals of Vision 2030, I am excited to apply this theory in the KSA. I believe that the funds of knowledge approach will be able to fill the gaps between the home and the school community. I have also learned so many techniques in implementing the theory into our curriculum.

Research Questions

This study took place in a Grade 1/2 classroom in a private school serving Muslim families, in Tucson, Arizona. Data was gathered in interviews with family members and from children sharing their responses to family story backpacks.

1. What factors influenced the differences in the home visit and the family story backpacks as strategies for exploring funds of knowledge?
2. What funds of knowledge are available within Muslim families of children?

Obstacles and Problems in Saudi Arabia

Education systems around the world face a lot of problems because technology and other aspects are transforming knowledge (Alzamail, 2008). The progress of educational systems has issues because of its complicated interactive and integrated parts, which have particular functions. Alzamail (2008) mentions the important challenges in Saudi Arabia's (KSA) educational system, such as a preference for verbal and rote education, as well as traditional teaching methods and curriculum. The traditional teacher who uses traditional methods will not necessarily reach or achieve students' goals for the future. In addition, the elementary school system is failing to incorporate improvement of skills, educational values, and student behavior,

all of which improve students' learning. This could cause a gap between the classroom and student life outside the school.

The other problems in the KSA educational system include an inadequate educational content. This is needed to build a strong, functional system that relates learners' needs with their environment. Alzamail (2008) explains the educational aims for elementary and middle school. For example, schools should teach students about religion, how to pray, good behavior, and encourage skills such as language and math, and provide activities for students in different subjects. In addition, there should also be opportunities to learn about the environment and be aware of students' duties and future tasks in life. The system should prepare students for the next stage and improve their abilities and skills to apply their knowledge throughout their lives. However, Alzamail (2008) does not mention in his aims how the school or teacher can learn more about students and the skills and knowledge they require.

Whereas Alzamail isolates student/teacher problems in the current KSA education system, Alhoqel (2003) focuses on the policy and education system in Saudi Arabia while also working to address students' needs. Alhoqel (2003) mentions the important conditions for the KSA education system, which are: the aims should reach all people through interaction and sharing, and last their entire lifetimes. This interaction and sharing gives them knowledge and experiences that they learn from each other. Vygotsky (1978) asserts similar notions in his sociocultural theory of child development, how through social interaction, a child can obtain knowledge and experiences. Alhoqel (2003) states that children help society through being socialized. Another aim of education is to introduce the Saudi culture to children and encourage them to preserve and advance that culture.

Alhoqel (2003) draws from related concepts to funds of knowledge and *confianza* when he mentions the aims of education in Saudi Arabia (KSA). He indicates how it is important to provide a welcoming environment that encourages the student. Furthermore, schools should be prepared to help students transition from being self-centered or egocentric to learning social skills such as sharing and communicating with others. In addition, schools need to understand the physical needs of children as they develop skills in movement. Schools should encourage students to use their perceptions and senses to explore the world. This resembles how Vygotsky (1986) believes children need a chance to learn with others who have more knowledge like adults, or from other sources such as books, school, the community, or other programs. Through these tools the learner will gain or acquire the language of communication beyond him/herself. This requires supportive adults who allow for connections between language, thought and cognition.

The significant aims of elementary education are to achieve cognitive development in students, by allowing them to use knowledge such as literacy, math, and science (Alhoqel, 2003). To achieve these aims people who are responsible for curricula should connect language with all materials because that encourages students to acquire the skills and knowledge. Moreover, teachers and students should practice language outside the classroom through various activities, visits, and trips, and students must engage in language education both in and outside the classroom. According to Alhoqel (2003), to achieve cognitive development for children in elementary school, curiosity should be fostered. Beyond that, schools should be required to help students learn how to select and utilize the appropriate sources and tools to achieve their goals. For example, a focus should be on teaching students how to be scholars by helping them learn how to find out knowledge by themselves, as well as to improve their abilities to answer their

questions and share their experiences. The school should then offer student workshops and work to enhance their learning and knowledge.

In addition, schools should teach children how to acquire knowledge to assist them in their lives and survive. Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) point out that funds of knowledge is a strategy that helps children to survive. In his proposal, Alzamail (2008) brings up some problems in the current KSA system. The important content found in a funds of knowledge education such as cultural knowledge, skills, and values, should support children and their families to survive. Alzamail (2008) goes on to explain the important problems facing the Saudi system. The most significant need is to improve individual abilities and prepare them to be active and able to support themselves and society. Somewhat problematically, the current K-6 grade system is not a big enough stage to develop children's knowledge and skills. Alzamail points out that by focusing on theoretical knowledge and traditional learning methods a gap emerges between knowledge and its practical application. Traditional methods in the classroom are weak and do not relate with students' need to survive, which is a reason a lot of students drop out and try to find employment instead.

Also, the Saudi K-6 curriculum does not value students' values, beliefs, or backgrounds. In other words, students come to school with pre-existing funds of knowledge, but the traditional system in the classroom ignores their funds of knowledge. As a result, there is little or no relationship between students' schoolwork and their home lives. Alzamail (2008) indicates that the educational system in KSA is more theory-based and the curriculum is designed to be more theoretical as opposed to practical or experiential. When traditional methods are used, information is memorized, and that is one reason students' interest in education is reduced. In other words, the educational system uses theoretical frameworks versus practical frameworks.

The funds of knowledge strategy ensures that teachers use both theory and practice in the classroom. Alzamail (2008) states this problem also exists in most Arab Gulf countries. From this point the author concludes that the problem is that K-6 students who drop out are unable to complete their education and learn how to succeed. The internal efficiency is low in K-12 schools, which impacts students' academic achievement. One solution for this is to approach basic education differently. If individuals have educational opportunities to apply their abilities, capacities, and talents, they can learn and grow in literacy, mathematics, problem solving, and oral expression. The important content in education should build off of students' knowledge, skills, values, and methods to enhance their ability to live and work as contributing members to society. This goal corresponds with how funds of knowledge aims to teach students.

Alzamail (2008) also refers to the major problems the Saudi educational system faces. The educational system has some obstacles, which KSA attempts to solve or at least mitigate, especially the ones which appear related to administration, curriculum, and methodology. For example, some systemic issues are inadequate rental facilities, funding for public education, and technology, and the epistemological effects of the traditional educational system (e.g. memorization and initiation). In addition, due to population increases, students of both genders are over-enrolled in relation to schools' capacity. That has forced the educational system to use rental buildings and housing to solve this problem. However, there are some problems with the rental buildings. The capacity of the buildings is not enough for students. The classrooms are next to each other and are too noisy, leaving no space for other activities.

Secondly, teachers have had problems in the rental buildings, which make it difficult for teachers to apply or execute the programs or activities in the classrooms. Thirdly, students had problems in the rental buildings, because the rooms and outdoor play areas at recess are

crowded. That is another reason to change the aim of education to primarily consider students' needs and interests. This will improve and expand to teaching methods and curriculum.

Alzamail (2008) asserts that the educational system in KSA has also faced problems in the curriculum. The content of Saudi education is not enough to teach children to develop themselves and their life skills. The current curriculum is not related to students' future work and production, nor to their home environment. In addition, the status quo is outdated and not related to students' modern lives and preparing them for the future.

By using traditional ways and memorization, Alzamail (2008) suggests that the curriculum has become focused on passively introducing knowledge and information. Even curriculum and instruction rely on traditional rote methods. The teacher's main role is to take the information directly from the textbook and lecture to students without creativity or activities, after which point the test will measure or evaluate how well the students have memorized the information. Alzamail (2008) constantly criticizes the curriculum, characterizes it, and defines its theoretical framework that relies on memorization and traditional ways more than on creativity or implementing skills through projects.

Other stakeholders also acknowledge how "wasted" education is a problem in the Saudi society (Alzamail, 2008). That means the government spends a lot of money and human resources on schools. Students who fail, get held back, or drop out prior to graduation become a burden of the government. That indicates there is a lack of balance or efficiency in the system. As a result, the opportunities for students to learn and improve their skills, knowledge, values, which they need to survive and complete academic achievement are lost and fail to grow. All of these factors affect the education budget and are considered a challenge that impacts the aims of the educational system. The waste includes students who have failed or are absent, as well as the

time of learning in school. Alzamail (2008) considers that the waste of education is the biggest problem because it negatively impacts students, teachers, households, and society.

According to Alzamail (2008), the K-8 grade levels are the most important stages because that is the fundamental base of the educational system. Those stages are considered the commitment stage and include all people in society. The people who miss this stage will adversely affect the economy because each individual is considered a key in economic production. In other words, students' failure or underachievement reduces the skilled labor force. Alzamail (2008) asserts that the reason for these problems is because the curriculum does not reflect student interests or individual differences and this contributes to their decrease in learning or in developing interests. In addition, some families do not understand how dangerous it is when their children drop out of school. Children from poor families sometimes drop out in order to help their families, and unemployment has always been a chronic problem in KSA. It is a challenge the educational system and society must face. Alzamail (2008) states the significant reason for this problem is the weak correlation between the educational system and labor needs. The author explains how necessary it is to consider this need. The weak correlation between education and labor gives rise to a gap between education and society. Also, there is an interaction between the educational system and work and the production market and the economy. This weak correlation is because the educational system is not in sync with the economy and production and it just focuses on theoretical academic study (Alzamail, 2008).

Moreover, the main difficulties facing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) educational system can be summarized in five main problems (Al Sayaq, 2014). Because these countries (KSA, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman) have similar cultures, they share the same goals. First, curriculum development is a big challenge. After

2011, the United States Congress report critiqued the curriculum of the GCC over its content, focused use of memorization, and traditional teaching methodologies. Also, the report pointed out how the GCC curriculum has been filled with fluff and redundancies and does not improve students' skills such as self-education, innovation and criticism. That is why the GCC needs to review its curriculum and remove the weak and negative components to create new generations who can improve themselves and society. Secondly, each GCC member country's Ministry of Education needs to strategically redevelop his or her curricula. The Ministry of Education sees itself as the connection between the curriculum and the learner. Once that connection is established, the first thing the learner will learn comes from the curriculum. Therefore, good curriculum development requires professional teachers who understand the curriculum as a whole. Teacher training is important, but unfortunately, such training is rare and does not help teachers learn how to teach more professionally. As the GCC defines it, the goal of new training is to provide teachers with new methodologies to improve their skills in teaching.

The third area of reform has to do with methods and teaching aids. Currently, the teaching methods within the GCC are considered traditional and rely on memorization. Furthermore, this technique discourages self-education or cooperative learning. Such teaching aids are new and not yet widely adopted as a lot of classrooms still lack technology, including the Internet, which is increasingly important. On the other hand, school libraries are very important and play a role in students and their self-education. This is becoming a significant goal in GCC countries' Ministries of Education. The availability of equipped and resource-rich libraries will encourage student to become researchers or scholars (Al Sayaq, 2014).

Fourth, the GCC singles out the differentiated instruction between genders as an issue in need of resolution. Schools within the GCC maintain a gender balance between learners in

elementary school but in middle school, there starts to be an imbalance when boys show a decreased interest in education. This is because male students start to lose interest in middle school, which continues on through high school. In particular, the economic situation in some families does not encourage male students to complete their education because they feel financially responsible for their family. Fifth, dropouts add to the growing problem. The high number of dropouts is the biggest problem in the GCC as far as education. Male middle school students are at the greatest risk for becoming dropouts. This stage is very important for students, especially teenagers. These students are not able to work or be active in work or business because they lack the experience to be hired. Two reasons that lead to students dropping out are the school environment and flaws in the curriculum. The disconnect between school, home, and family is a significant reason to drop out. Finally, the educational systems in GCC countries have challenges that involve changes in the economy, technology, politics, and society. The main consequence here is that upcoming generations will need to be prepared for more international interactions in the global marketplace.

To avoid all of these challenges, the GCC report suggests its member countries should work toward a solution. By reviewing and proposing to redevelop the entire curriculum, students can be more critical thinkers once self-education is encouraged. Cooperative GCC countries should work together to build a new structure. According to Al Sayaq (2014) the report strongly recommends that the Ministries of Education should find solutions by using research-based curricula and find out what other improving countries have done to be successful. They should also provide professional experiences so teachers can increase their effectiveness and also increase financial allocations for public education and incentivize the private sector to contribute more to the education system.

Looking Forward: Funds of Knowledge in a New Educational Vision for KSA

The educational system in KSA has started to develop a new government plan to bring major changes to all fields within education. I believe the Ninth Plan connects with the ideas in funds of knowledge and distributed leadership, but the theoretical foundation is missing. For Vision 2030 the Ninth Plan wants to focus more on education because education is what connects Saudi people to what they want for society as a whole. The idea would be to confirm how to support education by extending choices to all people to gain knowledge and skills and how to use them. The plan includes opening more preschools because the government realizes the importance of early education. In addition, they want 100% literacy due to the importance of educating all people to be able to read and write. The plan proposes to improve all educational organizations throughout the kingdom. The Ministry of Education seeks to restructure the entire educational system in general to support advancements in all areas.

King Abdullah's project or the Ninth Plan to support education (project PM/1087, 2007) has four important principles. The first principle aims to improve the curriculum to cover all the new techniques and enhance all knowledge for Saudi students including psychological health, quality of living, and labor experience. The second principle focuses on retaining teachers and preparing them for the new educational methods to reach the educational goals. The third principle looks to improve the educational environment and prepare students to engage with techniques for technological innovations to achieve an advanced level. The fourth principle supports the skills and talents and the desire to learn and goes in-depth to understand the connection between society and nationalism during the summer months.

As far as the Saudi student dropout rate, it has been a problem, but is beginning to improve. Although this rate has improved, research still needs to be done to improve the retention rate and

the quality of education. The new strategies of the plan are to establish a strong base to connect education with society's knowledge. In addition, the general goals to improve the educational environment's needs are qualitative and quantitative to create a new curriculum to help students to build and improve society. The plan wants to provide activities outside of the curricula to promote serving religion, society and nationalism. By focusing more on preschool education to establish an early love of education, the plan aims to improve the educational system.

Conclusion

Growing up in Saudi Arabia as young female student who then came to the United States, I have learned about how each household has its own home culture that can be incorporated into the school system. Throughout my education, we followed a strict curriculum that was made up of memorization and regurgitation. Funds of knowledge opens the door for original thought from generation to generation without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, privilege or beliefs. The goal of this research was to gain the knowledge necessary to bring to Saudi Arabia to increase understanding of multicultural education. This will encourage the tolerance of others and their skills and include families in their children's' education. However, these goals can only be achieved with mutual trust between schools, families and communities and through collaboration via distributed leadership. This can be done when educators understand the theory of funds of knowledge and are willing to accept change in a society whose vision for 2030 is to improve their educational system. As I was introduced to the concept of funds of knowledge and as I grew to learn the meaning of it, I wanted to know more about the funds of knowledge present in Muslim immigrant families. This allowed me to apply the concept of funds of knowledge in Saudi Arabia.

Overview

Chapter two includes a complete literature study and evaluates theories that support the study. Chapter three includes methodology, data collection and the context of the entire study. Chapter four includes details on the different factors that influence the differences in the home visits and family stories and how these differences influence the exploration of funds of knowledge. Chapter Five discusses specific funds of knowledge that exist in Muslim families and how the children can use these. The last chapter, chapter six, assesses the implications and recommendations for future research for Saudi Arabia and globally.

Chapter 2: Literature Review in Funds of Knowledge

This research is based on funds of knowledge and the role it can play in improving educational systems, in particular the implications for Saudi Arabia. Moll, Gonzalez, and Amanti (2005) explain funds of knowledge as the practices of everyday life and cultural knowledge in households and how such practices are resources for people in that household to survive. In this chapter, I introduce funds of knowledge as a theoretical and practical framework and how researchers Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) worked to implement funds of knowledge and the theories they used.

The ideas underpinning this chapter include Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and how it supports students in learning from their social and cultural lives through funds of knowledge. Other related areas include building trust, which supports the concept of funds of knowledge, especially within and between households, teachers, and communities. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) explain the confusion between the concept of funds of knowledge and what is often referred to as prior knowledge. All throughout this research, anthropological methods are crucial to create practical framework for implementing the funds of knowledge approach through home visits.

Much of the funds of knowledge research has historically occurred in low-income neighborhoods, and the notion of cultural capital is important in these contexts. Gravitt, Rio-Aguilar, Kiyama, and Moll (2016) mention the connection between funds of knowledge and students' academic achievement as well as how social class and culture impact their learning. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital, which relates to the concept of funds of knowledge by the fact that those included in a group, for example, a household, benefit from each other in observable ways. Moreover, the definition of culture is an important part of this research.

Gonzalez (2005) explains in depth about definitions of culture to create a bridge between anthropology and education, integrating culture into the classroom.

This chapter begins with the theoretical foundations and explores the original research on funds of knowledge. The chapter then examines other research studies on funds of knowledge and the current context of education in Saudi Arabia.

Theoretical Foundations of Funds of Knowledge

For a long time the work of Vygotsky (1934) has been the base of many scholars and socio-cultural theories in cognitive development. Vygotsky's theories create tension between the basic role of social interaction and the development of cognition. Vygotsky (1978) believes that community plays a main role in the action of making meanings. Conversely, Piaget (1959) advances the idea that children's cognitive development should surely precede their learning. Vygotsky (1978) asserts, "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function[s]" (p.90). That is to say, social learning prepares the way for development. Vygotsky (1934) also asserts that culture shapes cognitive development, which challenges Piaget's perspective of universal steps and content of development. In other words, Vygotsky thinks cognitive development differs across cultures, but Piaget (1959) considers cognitive development as mainly being constant across cultures.

Vygotsky (1962) emphasizes the role of language in cognitive development, resulting from assimilation of language into thought. However, according to Piaget, language relies on thought for development, in the sense that thought comes before language. But for Vygotsky (1962), language and thought are separate systems from the beginning of life, and join around three years of age, producing oral language. Both scholars believe that young children are

interested in being involved in their own learning and developing their new understanding.

Vygotsky's emphasis is on what social life offers to the process of development, whereas Piaget (1959) emphasizes self-initiated findings. According to Vygotsky (1978), it is important to learn via social interactions between child and an adult or parent. The adult may provide oral instruction for the child, which Vygotsky (1978) argues should take the form of collaborative dialogue, wherein the child searches to understand the actions provided by the adult, and then uses the information to guide their own performance.

Vygotsky's theory is that social interaction is very significant in cognitive development. Vygotsky (1978), states that children learn from their interactions with society and their culture, and that with some help from adults, they can learn more. The theory puts the adult or the teacher in the role of a mentor. So teaching is a mentoring process and mentoring assists and supports students. Also, the theory does not focus on the individual child but on the child within social interaction, so that the dynamic interactions are more important than the child by him/herself. In addition, Vygotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) supports the idea of social interactions critical for cognitive development. Some skills can be performed if the individual has help. Those skills will be within an individual's ZPD. The ZPD is the theoretical foundation for scaffolding. Children's understanding of their environment comes, in part, from the beliefs and values of adults and other children. Furthermore, play is an essential part of the child's learning. With play a child will achieve more with others and that achievement will subsequently become a basic level of real action (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky's (1978) social-cultural theory explains the development of cognition and mental processes. Mental processes are forms of knowledge and elements obtained through initial outward exchanges of information through activities or skills. Mental processes move

inward when a child transforms information from the outside and understands it on his/her own. That means the process transfers information and connects with a child's previous experience. Vygotsky (1978) believes that sharing experiences, language, and activities helps one to understand new knowledge and memories. In addition, Bronfenbrenner (1979) theorizes that learning comes from social relationships and interactions with others. By sharing activities and experiences with people in social environments, cognition develops. Bronfenbrenner (1979) asserts that learning within different organizations, such as home, school and community, affects the child.

Funds of Knowledge Theory and Research

The relationships between home, school, and community facilitate the exchange of knowledge. Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) call these knowledge exchanges funds of knowledge and their theory has been applied in multiple research studies. Funds of knowledge stems from the knowledge based on the talents, experiences, skills and abilities that families own and pass down to their children through cultural experiences and everyday practices within households. Funds of knowledge is described by Moll (1992) as "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 2). The research of funds of knowledge emerged through researchers, parents, and educators working together, and their efforts are based on the concept that people have knowledge and skills from their life experiences, which become essential assets for community learning and engagement.

Velez-Ibanez, as the director of the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (BARA) at the University of Arizona in 1983, established this research interest in the relationships of exchange. This study ("The Tucson Project") involved large ethnographic

interviews with households of working and middle class families. Gonzalez was a participant in this research as an ethnographer. She was born and raised in Tucson and so was familiar with the community during the time that she worked with this research team.

In addition, another educational researcher, Luis Moll, is an educational psychologist who worked with anthropologists. With the help of colleagues and teachers, he conducted studies in San Diego and used ethnographic methods to research classroom dynamics and home life with Mexican children and families. Moll was inspired by Vygotsky's cultural historical psychology that emphasizes how cultural practice and resources mediate developing thinking. Luis Moll (2005) explains his work in this research: classroom observations and videotapes of lessons enhance the analysis of social organization for bilingual schooling. In another study conducted in middle schools, Moll (2005), with assistance from several teachers, focused on language. In addition, they used home observations and interviews with families to document the extent of family literacy. The researchers and teachers met regularly to discuss what they learned from home observations and how they could use it in the classroom.

Funds of Knowledge and Background Knowledge

While funds of knowledge have been conflated with other concepts like prior, previous, or background knowledge, funds of knowledge are not only about gathering background or previous knowledge and relating it back to the classroom. Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992) argue that, in some respects, the concept of funds of knowledge is similar to these other concepts, though it also has key differences. For example, previous knowledge has to do with what students know about specific subjects or issues. As a result, the term previous knowledge can be more of a cognitive approach similar to schema theory referring to the way knowledge is organized into units. This schema is a system for understanding knowledge, how it is

represented and how it is used. It has to do with knowledge as something that is in students' minds which is then carried into the classroom from home, community, books, prior classes, and so on. At the same time, previous knowledge also involves the study of culture or practices that facilitate the survival of families and communities (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

To distinguish funds of knowledge, Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) developed a more qualitative way to connect the home to the classroom, which is something that teachers have tried to do. These researchers decided to locate the home-school connection within a cultural view of anthropology. By studying funds of knowledge, educators think like an anthropologist by looking at the ways people live, how they know and learn items, and how they create relationships. Therefore, the data collected comes from outside the classroom. For example, most researchers of funds of knowledge engage in visiting homes and communities to understand how and what people are aware of and engage with. Funds of knowledge researchers say that one could use this information to develop new curricula that connect the home and classroom. The researchers identified some types of funds of knowledge, including religion, hobbies, household tasks, geographic information, and the role of caregivers. These types of knowledge are used every day to survive. This concept stands in comparison to previous knowledge, where the emphasis in previous knowledge is that knowledge is learned and then does not change much.

The concept of funds of knowledge, however, stresses the family or community unit as holders of historical and cultural knowledge. This can change considerably as the family or community adapts to new circumstances. To prepare teachers to consider these aspects of families, researchers showed videos that have two short segments of scenes from ordinary communities and asked teachers to discuss what they saw. This experience helped teachers

prepare for future observational research as well as focus on paying attention to the details of household life.

Gonzalez (2005) states that they conducted three interviews with families. The first interview asked about a family's roots and how they came to Tucson, and about the neighborhood and the community in which they live. The second interview was based on regular household activities. Children were involved in these activities as well as adults; for example, the children worked and contributed to home improvements, childcare, the family business, and gardening. The third interview was the most complex and teacher-researchers reported that it was the most lengthy. The teachers asked their students' parents/caregivers questions about parenthood, raising children, and the experiences of being a parent. Also, parents were asked about their own school experiences and how their experiences contrasted with their children's school experiences.

After identifying the resources available in homes or communities, the main work of funds of knowledge includes teachers planning topics/units that emerge out of the research. These topics ask students to draw from knowledge outside the classroom of things students are familiar with from their households. The students need to engage and achieve as well, which depends on topics they can connect with or have access to. The teachers, also, need to be able to actively fit the school requirements into their topics/units. For example, the topic of gardening could be used to teach about math, literacy, or science through investigating households' gardening activities. Outside the classroom, students may have experience with parents who garden or with a community garden, and so on. From this point, funds of knowledge become the main component to planning curricula with a target to benefit the school and to meet educational standards. In contrast, previous knowledge is commonly used to find out students' prior

knowledge, but it does not necessarily impact teachers' planning for the topic/unit about to begin.

Finally, the principal difference between previous knowledge and funds of knowledge is that previous knowledge focuses on “what” the students know. Funds of knowledge, however, focus on the “how” and “why” students know what they know. As a result, funds of knowledge integrates the home and community into becoming part of the classroom. Funds of knowledge is more than just making a personal connection with students. It is a way of honoring knowledge that comes from students' experiences and thus balances the curriculum. To bring funds of knowledge into the classroom and then redesign the curriculum is not easy, but the result can be worth the struggle.

According to Gonzalez (2005), culture has different meanings for people around the world. Gonzalez views culture as practices, and that means what households do and how they think about what they do. Diversity of culture could be a strength but the reality, especially in school, is that the diversity of culture could also be a reason for why people fail, particularly those coming from poverty. Gonzalez gives an idea of how that is wrong. The difference between culture at home and in school makes teachers justify students' failing, even if they try to make both cultures the same. Gonzalez explains that the process of culture is always changing and, to define culture, people should look beyond fixed definitions such as community, school, households and how all of these can bring to school to create school's culture. People have to stop thinking about culture as static. It is a process for teachers to develop more skills and awareness as researchers. That pedagogy is not how most teachers teach. It is more about how students learn and how knowledge is produced. Gonzalez also talks about how discussion is power. That is because when teachers give the parents a chance to tell their story, that means

they give them value. That is how cultural values come from conversations to give parents power. Ideally, the value of going beyond cultural differences is that it opens space for the construction of new fields and helps students to not be locked into a box, but learn how to be open and more flexible in their understanding of culture.

Trust and Funds of Knowledge

According to Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005), building trust between households, classrooms, and communities promotes the concept of funds of knowledge, and also enhances trust. Their book, *Funds of Knowledge*, contains different views from different researchers. In the introduction for chapter one, the researchers present a brief description of how they have brought their theoretical concept into this order of relationships with the messiness of ordinary life. Everyday practices led their research effort to theorize practices that are sometimes developing, and sometimes fuzzy. These practices do not come out of nowhere; they are transformed within socio-historical situations.

Norma Gonzalez (2005) states that in their project all researchers and participants were learners. That means all parties involved, including students and communities, were learners. Norma Gonzalez started this project as an anthropologist researcher and brought that theoretical background into this study. Through this project, she understands that teachers need to practice ethnography studies and self-reflection. Also, Gonzalez mentions *Bonds of Mutual Trust* (1983) by Carlos Velez-Ibanez and discusses notions of trust and how trust gives power to people's funds of knowledge.

Relatedly, *confianza* is an important mediator in social relationships (Velez-Ibanez, 1983), and research on mutual trust. When working with families, it is important to pursue a mutually trusting relationship before asking direct questions about a household's funds of

knowledge (Moll, 2005). According to Gonzalez (2005), emphasizing *confianza* is the important element in social relationships. Trust (*confianza*) is critical between households and the outsiders who work with them in that building trust is necessary to allow teachers, children, and households to develop funds of knowledge in education. Moll (2005) mentions that Hispanic families respect teachers but in order for the teacher to be effective, they must gain the family's trust. At such a point, students have an opportunity to feel pride in their households and assist teachers in communicating with their parents and families. Bryk and Schneider (2002) describe trust as an action initiated by the teacher that stretches out to families through welcoming them to the school where there can have open conversations. In other words, the interactions make parents feel free with other parents, administration, and teachers and that encourages parents to trust and connect with the school staff and school culture. Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) assert that *confianza*, or trust, is an important theory when building interpersonal relationships in different cultures, and that trust was considered essential to cultural interactions especially among Mexican-origin populations.

The Role of Teachers within Funds of Knowledge

The studies serving as the basis of the first funds of knowledge study in 1988 were funded by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs in the U.S. Department of Education. The study was intended to replicate the home observations, the after school study group, and the classroom work. Luis Moll (2005) mentions that this project convinced the researchers of the great theoretical use of the concept of funds of knowledge in improving systematic methods to studying households. The researchers understood that they could visit different households to collect information as a way to inform them about how families generate, obtain, and distribute knowledge among and within other aspects of household life.

Furthermore, Luis Moll (2005) writes that teachers must have access to the data they collect because teachers will subsequently be able to use the data in their classrooms. Ideally, in a funds of knowledge approach, it is the teacher who conducts the interviews and observations with the families and community members, because the teachers are the ones who create the curriculum and work directly with the children.

Cathy Amanti was one of the teachers who participated in the original funds of knowledge projects. Amanti (2005) has a bilingual teaching certificate and explained her original misunderstanding of the project and how it assisted her to learn more. Her misconception was that low income and minority students were more likely to fail because their home life did not prepare them with skills they would need in school. In other words, teachers operated with the idea that students from low-income households came with poor life-experiences, leading to teachers thinking their life experiences were poor. However, funds of knowledge creates equity among students because all students' funds of knowledge are honored despite their families' income or minority status.

The method of doing this project was primarily ethnographic. Gonzalez (2005) explains that teachers learn ethnography by doing it, and the first step was to provide ethnographic literature for the teachers to read, which helps teachers understand the details of ethnographic methods. Second, the researchers and teachers role-play and discuss a non-evaluative, non-judgmental attitude to the fieldwork the teachers will be conducting. In other words, they need to understand how other people make sense of their lives, and what they themselves are about. The third step is how to be a good observer and pay attention to details, to observe the neighborhood and surrounding area. The researchers and teachers look for possible funds of

knowledge in material life and tools, in gardens, patio walls, restored automobiles, and ornaments on display.

Within families, the activities parents share with their children involve their talents and the traditions that they possess. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of child development shows how children can learn during social experiences and shared interactions with persons who have more knowledge or experience. Shared communications or interactions encouraged child development, which means that when children are involved with others in different activities of high concern, those interactions could be meaningful and affect their thinking and learning. Also, these interactions help children develop mental processes by connecting new skills to those they are interested in. These experiences are passed down to their eventual children and future generations, which develops their cultural background over time. Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) named this shared tradition funds of knowledge.

The theory found in *Funds of Knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) offers an additional way to encourage teachers to become involved with families and households outside of school. Here, the rich pedagogies of education and anthropology illuminate more about students' households, cultures, and skills. The researchers' qualitative methods, observations, interviews and home-visits with 100 families redefine what low-income households can share with schools and teachers, while the collaborative work between researchers and teachers and their subsequent discussions advance understanding in the household and the classroom. Also, this project is instructive in terms of teacher home-visits, where, by playing the role of learners, teachers encourage families to become more involved with their child's school.

By getting to know students as multidimensional individuals outside of class, the researchers explain how teachers can begin to see their students in different environments and

social networks. In addition, the book points out how to prepare teachers to identify funds of knowledge within their students' families by choosing various strategies and techniques, such as presentations, observations, interviews, clarification of study goals, training workshops, data management, field notes, and narrative analysis (Moll et al., 2005).

Gonzalez, Moll, Amanti, and Neff (2016) point out that funds of knowledge is a specific strategic knowledge that focuses on social and economic activities in a specific place. In contrast, culture is a broad definition of a group of people whereas funds of knowledge is specific to students and their families. As a result, this knowledge changes as student populations change. From this point funds of knowledge can be used to approach new strategies and explore what the teachers as researchers found when they applied this theory and the teaching method in their classrooms. This theory can mitigate the gaps in a system of education.

For this process to work, Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) stress how teachers also need to become learners. From this point it is important to think about teachers' vocations. One aspect of a teacher's job is to reach new levels of understanding about the students in the classroom. Many classrooms have a variety of students who come from different cultures and backgrounds. It may not be as hard a task for a teacher whose students come from the same culture as the teacher, but for students with a childhood or lifestyle differing completely from the teacher, it may be a harder task. An example of this can be seen in Gilmore's (1985) article in which the teacher did not understand the complicated steps and words the students had learned from their siblings and peers. Stepping was looked at as vulgar instead of a series of complicated movements with memorized and ad-libbed lyrics.

Funds of knowledge is one way to assist the teacher to form new links or bonds with children and their families. That means teachers are responsible to try to learn something of

value and special about each student in the classroom. In order for the teacher to obtain this sort of knowledge about the social network and household of their students, teachers may need to be willing to conduct home visits and visit the communities of their students to observe and acquire an experiential knowledge of their students, their families, and their communities. Most of the publications of funds of knowledge include teachers collaborating with ethnographers, and learning ethnographic methods along the way (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). The advantage that teachers bring to the research partnership is that they can learn more about students' backgrounds and their life outside the school, which they can later apply in the classroom.

Most teachers care about their students but unless they attempt to learn and know their students' experiences and personal circumstances, the teacher is not taking significant steps in the classroom to learn what students can bring from their own backgrounds. Through funds of knowledge, a teacher tries to know more about students by understanding what rich cultural and cognitive resources the students' households carry.

Social Capital and Funds of Knowledge

In *Responsibility in Childhood*, the authors cite case studies of childhoods in three different cultures: the Matsigenka in Peru, Samoan culture, and the culture of middle-class Los Angeles (Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009). From these case studies, they propose a theory about the value of daily tasks in the home in developing a child's responsibility towards others.

In *Unequal Childhoods*, the concept of social class is believed to have high importance on a child's ability to succeed (Lareau, 2011). Other approaches of looking at a student's potential include believing that a strong work ethic and ambition explain differences in achievements, or using the correlation in student achievement with measurable, numerical

differences, such as family income or the number of years of education a parent has completed. Instead, Lareau sees distinct categories based on social milieus instead of essentially one culture that differs only in numerical gradations. Social classes are a way to group people together by similarity in family practices. For instance, in the US, practices associated with raising children and being a good parent do not mean the same thing across differences in socioeconomic classes.

Gravitt, Rio-Aguilar, Kiyama, and Moll (2016) mention the relationship between funds of knowledge and students' academic achievement through redesigning the curriculum. They connect two discrete forms of capital: social and cultural. These two forms of capital impact the social status and household economy. Funds of knowledge and social capital are important for minority students' education and academic achievement. This attempt seems to suggest the need to examine how to attach a capitalist perspective to existing learning. Funds of knowledge can inform research and the authors provide a good understanding of learning experiences for minority or underrepresented students. For example, in Saudi Arabia many children or grandchildren of former slaves attend school along with Saudi nationals and are treated differently. Slavery ended in Saudi Arabia in 1962 (House, 2011). Since then, the Saudi educational system has postured acceptance, but in reality, these children are treated differently. Many of these students come to class with a wealth of knowledge that goes ignored because they are considered outsiders. Other marginalized groups who have different belief systems, are treated differently as well.

Gravitt, Rio-Aguilar, Kiyama, and Moll (2016) start their discussion with a short overview of the concept of funds of knowledge. They then present a conceptual outline of cultural capital and social capital. They also examine more in-depth how funds of knowledge

along with capital theory can be understood as educational opportunities. The definition of funds of knowledge is shared with other types of capital, including, social, human, cultural, and linguistic. Similar to Bourdieu (1986), the definition of social capital and the concept of funds of knowledge reflect the fact that belonging to a group of households benefits the members.

Furthermore, there is a link between the idea of practice and the idea of funds of knowledge. The definition of habitus is the disposition through which people understand, evaluate, and recognize the world around them (Bourdieu 1986). The attachment between these concepts comes from the simple understanding of culture, and it is not a normative notion, but something dynamic that is experienced in everyday life. What the children learn, explore and absorb in the Islamic school, for instance, will affect the lens with which they view the world outside of the classroom and at home. It is their everyday experiences at home and how they apply these in school that defines their curriculum.

According to Gravitt, Rio-Aguilar, Kiyama, and Moll (2016), social and cultural capital have occupied the attention of educational scholars and policymakers working toward improving education in the United States. However, most educational researchers use Bourdieu's theoretical standard that the common application is no true social system. It focuses attention on the role of creating relationships with teachers, school staff, and counselors to improve the educational system. But with some exceptions, Bourdieu's view of educational research has been unsuccessful because it does not represent working class students' and families' social networks that influence students' academic achievement.

In addition, researchers in education disregard the cultural components of social capital. The various cultural practices may set up social capital relations. In other words, there is a relationship between the level of educational achievement and cultural values. The investment

of social relation must be an interaction between social relation and cultural values to certain ethnic groups (Bankston, 2004). This cultural component of drive for educational success impacts the students understanding of education and its value based on their personal experiences and struggles without it. This furthermore bolsters the recommendation that in the future, social capital research needs to inquire how culture, social structures, and the socioeconomic situation of various students' ethnic groups combine in complicated ways and may give unexpected results.

Gravitt et. al (2016) assert that a funds of knowledge framework highlights and values the resources among students, families, communities, and thus responds to deficit perspectives. In a deficit perspective, the deficit is viewed as the result of failure in students, families, and their cultures. However, funds of knowledge provides researchers and practitioners with findings and important points to understand the resources that students bring to the classroom, which challenge schooling practices. Furthermore, another important point of the funds of knowledge approach is the implication of utilizing the resources and skills of working-class families for educational action.

Funds of Knowledge and Classroom Practice

Amanti, Moll, and Gonzales (2005) discuss that the funds of knowledge approach to understanding households and their cultural resources can result in the possibility of change in classroom practices. Von Kotze (2002) recommends livelihood activities incorporate not only how people making a living economically, but also the major cultural activities in which communities and individuals are involved in order to reproduce and restore their identities. Feelings of belonging and self-respect require that the notion of livelihood include the feeling of well-being, not just survival. From this perspective, there is an attention to gain deeper

understanding about how household livelihoods and funds of knowledge change over time. Conducting an examination of learning through livelihood activities cannot use the general questions such as “how to live” or “what do you do to live?” because each day the activities may change. In other words, the questions must be located within present conditions for living.

The goal is to document not only how people make do under situations they cannot control, but also how new systems of migration and social control lead people to adopt new strategies to survive and create their own social alliances, forms of social identity, and social affiliation. In the tradition of the funds of knowledge method, this strategy (1) enables teachers to know the lives of their students well and to establish relationships with them; (2) encourages students to learn more about different communities; (3) builds on the students’ earlier knowledge; and (4) promotes students to get involved and in learning.

The method of doing this project is primarily ethnographic. Gonzalez (2005) explains that teachers learn ethnography by doing it, and the first step is to provide ethnographic literature for the teachers to read, which helps the teachers understand the details of ethnographic methods. Second, the researchers and teachers role-play and discuss a non-evaluative, non-judgmental attitude to the fieldwork the teachers will be conducting. In other words, they need to understand how other people make sense of their lives, and what they themselves are about. The third step is how to be a good observer and pay attention to details, to observe the neighborhood and surrounding area.

Amanti, Moll and Gonzalez (2005) mention in their beginning research on funds of knowledge, that it was developed in relation to literacy education for Latino children in the U.S. southwest. The approach involved the collaboration with teachers as co-researchers utilizing ethnographic methods like observation and interviews with households, especially with low-

income communities. The main concept is that the families the researchers studied can be characterized by practices. These practices contain knowledge and are developed, obtained and are built in the living of their lives.

Also, the household members frequently participate in social networks with relatives, and through which funds of knowledge may be exchanged in addressing significant aspects of their lives (Moll, Soto-Santiago, & Schwartz, 2013). For example, one can help a neighbor fix a car because one has knowledge and experience as an auto mechanic, and the other can install a fence because that task is within his or her experiences. Notice that exchange in this case is not of the capital for labor as in advertisement transaction. These exchanges of funds of knowledge included in households may be separate from non-monetary household economies.

By understanding the connection between theory and practice one realizes that the student is more important than the teacher in controlling what is learned in the classroom. Moreover, the best way to conduct Vygotsky's theory is through group work. The group work can be achieved in different ways. First, peer to peer: by having students work in small groups or pairs, this provides students the chance to share their ideas, views, and opinions together. One impact of this is a more relaxed environment where students feel comfortable to ask questions and share their ideas by listening to each other. A second method is to include parents/families by bringing parents into the classroom to support students in their learning. Likewise, providing a secure and safe environment assist students' academic achievement. Finally, community members can help in the classroom too, by sharing their expertise or experience. Students can be introduced to new ways of thinking, such as how to solve problems and to build creative thinking skills.

Many of the observed families are connected to systems of extended family members and friends. The children who grow up within this system develop connections to many adults outside their families as the children learn about different crafts or trades through these relationships. This thick exchange of useful skills and everyday decision-making grants children an instinctive knowledge base. This knowledge base can offer beneficial connections to school learning. The teacher-researchers' goal is to comprehend what children already know as an introduction to academic learning and then to encourage them.

Bringing family and community members into the classroom benefits students by exposing them to different and new cultures. As an effect, a student-driven classroom is created. The probability of students buying into their education becomes more likely. As a result, their interest in learning also increases. Over time this creates higher standards, which result in greater student accomplishments.

Home Visits and Funds of Knowledge

Teachers and parents have shared their perceptions about the advantages of home visits as a way to open communication and collaborate more closely to encourage student learning (Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti, 2005). The joint partnership between anthropologists and educators primarily studied classroom and household practices in a working class, Mexican-American neighborhood in Tucson, Arizona. The purpose of this work is to develop new teaching practices that are based on background skills and knowledge found in households.

To achieve this goal, the teacher-researchers developed an approach that depends on a qualitative understanding of both classroom and household. They use a mixture of open-ended interviewing, ethnographic observations, life histories, and case studies. Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (2005) note that the central aspect of the project is a qualitative study of households.

This procedure involves understanding the history of the surrounding regions in Mexico and the United States, as well as examining the social history of households and their development. The main purpose is to collect the labor histories of the families, which highlight the gathered bodies of household knowledge. The researchers' claim is that by taking account of households and community resources, they can improve the quality of class instruction (Moll et al, 2005). They discuss the developments and set up strategic connections that take the form of shared household research between teachers and university-based researchers, leading to more ethnographically-informed classroom practices.

Among other findings, they determined that household knowledge is diverse and broad. Also, households' knowledge may include information about animal management and farming related to the households' rural area; knowledge about buildings and directions throughout the city grid due to parents' commutes to work; and other knowledge about disparate topics such as business and trade. These historically gathered and culturally developed bodies of household knowledge and talents comprise the aforementioned funds of knowledge. In addition, the research approach involves studying how households use their funds of knowledge in relation to changing, sometimes difficult, economic and social situations. The researchers were interested in how families developed and sustained social networks to communicate and make sense of their social environments, and how their social relationships facilitated the exchange of resources, skills, knowledge, and labor that increased a given household's ability to survive.

Even more recently, Gonzalez, Moll, Amanti, and Neff (2016) discuss how teachers can make use of funds of knowledge in their classrooms and teaching. With that goal in mind, the researchers met with teachers after school, and the teachers and researchers discussed the completed analysis of teachers' classrooms, and also discussed household observations as well as

returning to their notes on the teaching of literacy. This after-school setting is described as a social context, and serves to enhance and support teachers' work. The researchers then present their findings to the teachers in order to figure out the relevance of their findings to teachers' work in the classroom.

Typically, researchers rely on "a transmission" model, which means they gather and share the information, and the teachers receive it without engaging in this production of knowledge. According to Gonzalez et al (2005), the goal of this study was to explore teacher-researcher collaboration and to manage household research, and ultimately to use the information to reshape and improve classroom practices. Throughout their study, ten teachers participated in training workshops on qualitative methods, where they learned to incorporate ethnographic observations, write field notes, conduct interviews, and manage and examine data. Each teacher chose to study three households of their students in their classrooms and the teachers visited 25 households in total. They conducted 100 observations and interviews during one semester of study. The teacher (Kathy Amanti) and anthropologist (Deborah Neff) who assisted Amanti in the study both explained their experiences when carrying out this research. When they went to interview members of a given household, the researchers were apprehensive about entering households.

For example, the child of a particular household was one of Amanti's students. First, the researchers and the adult members of the household spent ten minutes discussing the child's performance in Amanti's class. Also, Amanti explained to the child's mother about school activities and offered the mother an opportunity to become more involved in these activities. The mother was cooperative with the teacher-researchers and she tried to make useful observations to assist them. The relationship between researchers and households helped to

build mutual respect, or *confianza*. Also, the mother started to share family history, activities, and pictures with the researchers. Amanti and Neff utilized qualitative approaches to study household knowledge, and transfer this knowledge to develop curricula and pedagogies. This home visit helped the teacher-researchers adapt their methods toward the educational purposes of their project.

One goal from home visits is not to conduct official school business but to teach the teachers how to be learners, and to establish new relationships with members of a household. This relationship could form the basis for: providing academic content, exchanging knowledge about family and school affairs, and reducing classroom barriers in and outside the classroom. In addition, it could be motivating for creating new research teams to study what is important to teachers, thus enhancing their curricular aims.

Research on Funds of Knowledge Approaches

Many researchers have extended the original funds of knowledge studies to other contexts and to the use of other strategies than home visits. This research has both supported and challenged the original research.

Despite funds of knowledge's considerable advantages, there are some potential downsides or obstacles to successful implementation. To that point, Zipin's (2009) study uses a mixed methodology in the Northern Suburbs of Adelaide, a capital city in a state of South Australia. This study was created through collaboration between a university team and three teachers each from 10 high schools. Zipin (2009) wanted to build curriculum around light (positive) funds of knowledge, and not dark funds of knowledge from students' life-worlds. Also, he emphasizes knowledge content but not ways of knowing and conducting knowledge.

Zipin (2009) found that dark funds of knowledge appeared in that study, and included

difficult circumstances such as drug abuse, alcohol, and crime, all of which affected student learning. When teachers asked the students to bring in cultural artifacts from their life-worlds to teach and discuss their meaning, the teachers found that dark funds of knowledge came with students into the classroom. These dark funds of knowledge resulted in mixed emotions and caused some teachers to worry. When students bring their “life-world” into the classroom and it includes dark funds of knowledge, a teacher should not overreact. When students feel safe to talk about the darkness in their lives in a classroom setting, the potential for balanced curriculum occurs. On the other hand, students may need to have a separation from their dark ‘life-worlds’, in which case the classroom might serve as a safe place where they are not consumed with their dark funds of knowledge (Zipin, 2009). Zipin emphasizes that having dark funds of knowledge in the classroom is still worthwhile is because it vitalizes the curriculum.

In Zipin’s study, some teachers discussed how to recognize dark funds of knowledge and use them to increase light funds of knowledge, so as to “attenuate ‘dark’ with ‘light’” (p. 321). Others emphasized using strict guidelines to protect their students from dark funds of knowledge. Zipin (2009) states that teachers should focus on the light side, not the content, and work on including dark funds of knowledge in their curricula to benefit students. Also, Zipin found that some teachers suggested that the situation depends on their dark knowledge. Students find it difficult to bring their dark knowledge into the classroom because they have preferred aspects of their “life-worlds” that are outside the school.

Interestingly, Zipin (2009) points out that Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) avoided dark funds of knowledge in their book. Zipin (2009) also notes that for at-risk students, the potential asset of their “life-worlds” could turn out to be a disadvantage in the classroom. He

claims that we should think critically about all these assets of funds of knowledge. Zipin (2009) proposes the question: “Can only ‘positive’ in learners’ ‘life-worlds’ constitute positive learning assets?” (p.322) arguing that Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) do not address such dark assets that come from the difficult and hard life. A difficult life could be transferred to light funds of knowledge. “Difficult ‘life-world’ knowledge can indeed fund ‘life-world’– vitalized curricula to engage learners” (p. 323). At the same time, because a family network consists of different communities and cultures, there could be problems between children, teachers, and families and the school, depending on how funds of knowledge changes. The sociocultural life and interaction among people from differing experiences can enhance and support the exchange of knowledge between people, households and communities.

Among other practices which aim to understand funds of knowledge through students’ backgrounds, Acevedo, Kleker, Pangle and Short (2016) interviewed teacher candidates to know how family stories encourage families to share their funds of knowledge in the classroom. The researchers hoped to glean positive stories from teacher candidates, but the teacher candidates, unfortunately, initially supplied deficit perspectives on families. Nonetheless, these findings assisted the researchers in creating a space for educators to hear stories from teacher candidates about their backgrounds and to then use those stories as a basis to change their instruction. The researchers document how the stories of teacher candidates informed researchers’ work with family story backpacks over a three-year period and shifted the perspectives of the teacher candidates from a deficit perspective to a valuing of household funds of knowledge.

In order to achieve this, the researchers designed nine different backpacks around important themes for families. They included themes of bedtime rituals, the origin of names, birthday traditions, and grandparents. Each teacher candidate chose six of the nine backpacks to

take to the K-2 student-teaching classroom and organized the schedule so that 4-6 backpacks could go home to the families each week. The backpacks contain three books (one informational global concept book and two picture book stories) that connect to an artifact and a family story journal. The reasons for the artifacts are to encourage the family to tell oral stories. The stories and values which come through the backpacks inform teachers about their students' knowledge and lifestyles and are "based on the CREATE principles and [teachers'] belief that all children come to school with stories that reflect the culture of their families and communities" (p. 4). Families can then share their experiences and stories by writing and/or drawing in the backpacks' family story journal. This journal stays with the backpack and each week a family can read preceding entries from the backpacks' previous home with a different household and child. That helps children share with both their teacher and classmates when the backpacks are returned to school.

As educators, the researchers' role is to motivate the telling of stories as a way to value and be aware of each family's funds of knowledge. In addition, rather than just sending home updates from school, the researchers want to acquire knowledge from and with families, which helps families become more involved and models how to interact with the school. Researchers hope that the backpacks can help build relationships with families through respect and trust (similar to the concept of *confianza*). The researchers then try to identify stories as meaning-making within teacher education. They note how "stories are our means for making sense of the world" (p. 2). Correspondingly, a story is a constructive action based on experiences and has a multiplicity of meanings. A story also has a unique place in education. Because teaching is an intentional movement based in belief, the stories that appear from that movement provide remarkable access to teacher knowledge and so the story has found a place in teacher education

research (Acevedo, Kleker, Pangle, & Short, 2016). Story has been key to supporting teachers and teacher candidates as a means of reflecting on their learning and rethinking their skills and understanding of their students' (and their own) self-identity and practice. In other words, by providing chances for teachers to reflect on their practice in the classroom, teachers are able to recompose their skills through story.

Since teachers' and teacher candidates' understanding of story is culturally-based and involves the families, the family story backpacks can transfer the curriculum from home to school making possible the sharing of stories. So too does the researchers' interview give teacher candidates a chance to create stories about their experiences with backpacks, thereby influencing researchers to rethink their practice as educators.

The academic achievement of children from families in small ethnic communities is a significant issue in the United Kingdom (UK). Strong parent and community support connect to high expectations. Andrews, Ching Yee, Greenhough, Hughes, and Winter (2005) mention two teachers' views on the roles that parents in communities and children's' home lives play in the learning of mathematics in elementary school. The researchers use the concept of funds of knowledge to think about how teachers' own backgrounds and beliefs influence their work with children and parents in the field of mathematics and in their professional experiences. The researchers focus on the teachers and consider what funds of knowledge they bring to teaching of mathematics in the classroom, to working with parents and taking into consideration children's home lives.

According to Andrews, Ching Yee, Greenhough, Hughes, and Winter (2005), this study was conducted in two multicultural urban schools in the UK: Bristol, in England and Cardiff in Wales. The data discussed were composed of two semi-structured interviews with two teachers

in two different elementary schools. Data collection involved visiting the schools with the aim of observing lessons and to make evaluations. In initial interviews the researchers explored many ways that understanding funds of knowledge can be impacted. Much depends on the teacher's background and their knowledge of their students. In addition, the ability teachers have to engage their parents has an impact. Specific to mathematics, the background in math the teachers have as well as their attitudes toward the value of mathematics instruction also impacts their view. The teachers' beliefs about mathematical learning, how they see their students work with math, and how math is practiced at home are also factors. At the end of the year, additional interviews focused on changes in teacher views and practices. The researchers collected data about the children, practices used in instruction, children and school, children and home, the teachers, relationships with the parents, and feedback on school-based activities.

As a result, because teachers have different backgrounds this impacts their attitudes toward their funds of knowledge and how they view their students' funds of knowledge. The schools need support in educating teachers on funds of knowledge and how the teacher's experiences can assist students' funds of knowledge in mathematics.

Moll and Combs (2016) offer three examples of how funds of knowledge approaches have been adapted in different global contexts. Each one was conducted in a different country (Uganda, South Africa and Australia) and all were engaged in different multicultural circumstances and difficult social conditions. The Australian studies by Zipin have already been reported in this paper so I will focus on the other two sets of studies.

First, in Uganda, the funds of knowledge of children living in child-headed households was studied by Namazzi and Kendrick (2014). The children were orphaned and the parents missing because HIV/AIDS had decimated the region. The children used their funds of

knowledge for survival and protection. Circumstances such as these helped the researchers to document different funds of knowledge in which children had agency along with the mediating role of social relations and culture in expanding their funds of knowledge. Namazzi and Kendrick (2014) mention the multilingual cultural resources that could be used as a tool for teaching and learning. Those resources include language practices such as songs, stories, riddles, proverbs, and also translation between Luganda and English.

In South Africa, the funds of knowledge research involves a method that documents family and community knowledge within reconciliation pedagogy (Ferreira & Janks, 2007). The research was led not by teachers but by students from high school. The participants were from three racially integrated classes, and the researchers collected data from families, neighbors, and communities. Reconciliation pedagogy mentions the ways of learning about apartheid history, the struggles through the history, the abuses of human rights, and how contemporary history is important, especially with young students' identities. In this research, students were both black and white and resisted talking about the past and how people were struggling for equity.

In this project, it was a chance for communities to teach students about the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC), because that might teach them about different funds of knowledge from different communities, and enable them to see another side from their own history (Ferreira & Janks, 2007). The students' research was structural, limited only by time and their lack of experience. The teachers provide them a handout with basic information about TRC. Also the teachers provided the student with lists of questions to use to interview and students relied on their social networks. By collecting these information, that helps students to collect lived narrative that would enable them to measure the impact of the TRC on people they know. As a result, the goals were, first: to create a postcard that summarized the core of the

TRC; second, to reflect on what research activity means for them. The outcomes of the students deeply affected what they learned, and they discovered family experiences they did not know about. Some of the students were surprised because they learned more about their family members who had been engaged in the TRC, as well as more about the relationship between South Africa's history and their own identities. One of the students reported that happened to his family and they did not talk about it.

This research from a range of global contexts indicates the ways in which funds of knowledge has been adapted as well as how the researchers' own interests and backgrounds have influenced how they approach these studies.

Conclusion

Chapter two discussed the literature review, and the theoretical foundation of funds of knowledge. I mentioned several theories and described how these theories apply to this study, as well as to the meaning of funds of knowledge. In addition, I mentioned the role of teachers within funds of knowledge and how they can implement this theory by changing classroom practices. I related the strategies teachers use in these practices to identify the funds of knowledge and the social capital the students bring. Lastly, I showcased existing research on funds of knowledge approaches around the world and the varying types of funds of knowledge (dark compared to light) they were able to discover based on the culture they revolved their research around.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of a qualitative research “should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.24). In this study, a qualitative approach was used in order to have the flexibility to “reconsider or modify any design decision during the study in response to new developments or to changes in some other aspect of the design” (Maxwell, 2012, p.215). The general approach in this research design is qualitative and includes observations, ethnographic data collection strategies, and interviews. I chose this approach because I wanted to create a similar study to that conducted in the original *Funds of Knowledge* research by Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti in 2005.

It is also important to note that a qualitative study is based on a specific paradigm: “paradigms are philosophical positions such as positivism, constructivism, realism, and pragmatism, each embodying very different ideas about reality and how we can gain knowledge of it” (Maxwell, 2012, p.224). I constructed my study with the paradigm of social constructivism in mind, as described by Dagar and Yadav (2016), “Children acquire knowledge through their actions and passes through stages of assimilation, accommodation and equilibrium in the process of knowledge construction” (p.4). This foundational paradigm formed the basis of this research.

The Participants and The School Context

The study was conducted at Al fajir Islamic School in Tucson, a private school. The original school was located at the Islamic Center of Tucson and opened in the late 1990s. Construction of the current building was completed in 2008 on land that was donated by the Islamic Center for Education. Al Huda Islamic School of Tucson has been open for 25 years.

Students at Al fajir represent a diverse population that includes 71% Black and 29% White students. Of the 43 currently enrolled students, most are of immigrant status. The table below describes the ethnicity of students in the school:

Ethnicity of Student Population

Ethnicity	Percentage
Black	71%
White	29%
Two or More Races	<1%
Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander	<1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	<1%
Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander	<1%
Hispanic	<1%

The school curriculum includes instruction in Arabic and Islam. Families that send their children to Al fajir have made an intentional choice to have this curriculum taught to their children. Al fajir Islamic school has students from immigrant and refugee families as well. The school has created their own curriculum but students take national exams. The teachers are selected according to a vetting process assessing for experience, language knowledge, and teaching certifications. They prefer knowledge of the Qu'ran and teachers who speak Arabic. The teachers of the Quran must be fluent in Arabic and a practicing Muslim. Nevertheless, there is a teacher in the school who is not Muslim but is qualified for the classroom.

In the Fall of 2017, I interviewed Lynn Houranni and Ahmed Meiloud to learn more about the school. They said that Al fajir has always been a private school and enjoys some

freedom to do as it wants. They can offer Islamic studies, Arabic and Quranic studies. It is owned by the Islamic Center of Tucson, a non-profit organization. Parents pay tuition, but if unable, the Islamic Center will cover the costs. To help with this, tax-credit donations can be made. They receive funds from a variety of other sources ("Al-Huda Islamic School: About" n.d).

Al fajir Islamic School is the only Islamic private school in Southern Arizona, located on East River Road in Tucson, Arizona. It has a non-profit 501 (c) 3 status. Accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, it serves grades PreK-5. A Board of Education Committee regulates the school. Because of the low enrollment, some grades are combined. For example, during the study, 1st and 2nd grades were combined. Some students had siblings in other classes. Because of the low student/teacher ratio, Al fajir Islamic School can ensure that students receive individualized attention. Currently no students receive free or reduced lunch at the school even though the students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. There are struggling families with single incomes and students whose parents are medical doctors or university professors. Other families are reliant on government assistance.

The mission statement for Al fajir Islamic School is to nurture Muslim students to become compassionate, intellectual role models and leaders. Their approach is to provide an Islamic curriculum and Arabic language instruction. The school encourages students to reach their full spiritual and social abilities.

Their comprehensive program is built on curriculum published by Pearson. Pearson is one of the world's leading educational companies that provides educational materials, technologies, and assessments to teachers and students. It covers all subjects, but Al fajir school

relies on it for math, science, social studies, language and language arts. The school's reliance on Pearson, a western publisher, could be seen as a contraindication to its mission as an Arabic school.

Teachers who instruct the Quran must be qualified, having received training as a recognized Qur'anic school. The current teacher of the Quran studied in Egypt in a program that is recognized for its authority in Qur'anic recitation style. This teacher is qualified and receives training through the Islamic Center of Tucson.

Most of the five full time teachers speak Arabic and one is a non-Muslim teacher. There are also two part time teachers. The school works with parents as a team to achieve their goal together, encouraging parents to be involved and play an active role. Their "open door policy" encourages parents to give feedback.

The parents at Al fajir school are very involved. As a community, the stakeholders value the connection between home and school as the most important element. Parents bring their children to school, attend some meetings, and take advantage of volunteer tutoring opportunities.

Research Participants

In this study I was looking for three or more families as participants. Though I tried to connect with all of the students' parents in order to explain my research, I was not able to reach them all. The teachers and the school coordinator worked to help me. Because the families did not quite understand the purpose of the research or the importance, many were late to submit the form if at all. I wanted to work specifically with a primary-school teacher and because the school is so small, there were only a few teachers that fell under this category. By default, I worked with one teacher. I was not familiar with the teacher or the students until I made my initial visit in the spring of 2017. When I began this study, the students in the selected class each received a letter

of invitation to participate, including an outline of the home visits. The teacher helped me choose participants from those who returned the invitation. I was invited to talk to the parents when they came to pick up their children. With this support, I attained three approvals from the Somali, Egyptian, and Pakistani families and their children.

I was granted permission from the parents or guardians via a letter sent home, before collecting data from students or in the home. A separate letter was sent home that assured parents that any data collected would only be used in this study and that pseudonyms would be used in final documents.

The participants included one primary-school teacher, the 5 children in the classroom, and their respective families. I focused specifically on two first-graders and one second-grader in the same class. The students were from Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia. I worked with the teacher in the classroom and the three families in their homes, where interviews were conducted. The teacher was an American, who was neither Muslim nor Arabic-speaking. She had previously worked abroad. She collaborated with me, and helped me to connect with the families because she had more experience working with them, especially with regards to explaining the IRB forms. From the beginning, she was very excited to work with me, and really wanted to learn more about these immigrant families to work with the students more effectively. She was therefore, invested in the results of my research. In particular, she was excited about the family story backpacks, which I used to collect data. The backpacks served as a secondary curriculum to bridge the gap between school and home, allowing families' stories to be shared around one topic easily.

The first immigrant family was from Pakistan, and the mother was so excited for the home visits that I did not need to spend time explaining my study to persuade her. She signed the

forms immediately. Her husband works at the medical center at the university. They have three daughters, the second of who was in the second grade and was the student in the classroom I was collaborating with. Their family speaks English and Urdu. She asked me about the content of the questions I was going to ask her, and she told me not to ask her any detailed questions about her religion. She wore a loose hijab, Punjabi-style.

The second family was an immigrant family from Egypt. She has two daughters. The elder of the two is the one who was in the classroom I worked in. The parents both speak English and Arabic very well, and the daughters are learning Arabic. Her husband works at the medical center at the university as well. She was also excited to meet me. She did not ask about the content of the questions. She wears the hijab, Egyptian-style, when she leaves home.

The third one was a Somali refugee family. They speak Somali and English. The seventh of her nine children was the one in the class I worked with. I met her husband and he did not falter to welcome me. When I met the mother, however, she was hesitant and cautious in her interactions with me. She asked me why I was going to record the interview. The mother and all of her daughters wore the hijab both inside and outside of the house. Her husband seemed to be a hard worker, but the family chose not to reveal the type of work.

Because I am from Saudi Arabia and speak Arabic, I shared a similar culture with students and their families. This school curriculum and population most closely resembles schools in Saudi Arabia of the schools currently operating in Tucson. It is for these reasons I chose Al fajir. I also hoped that my background would allow me the privilege of being less threatening to the families I was working with.

Data Collection

In order to properly answer my two question: what factors influence the differences in the

home visits and family stories as strategies for exploring funds of knowledge? What funds of knowledge are available within Muslim Families of children? To answer these questions. I collected data from family visits, interviews, family backpack stories, student discussion and personal field notes.

The Family Visits and Interviews

I worked with 3 families from Egypt, Pakistan, and Somalia. The interviews were all conducted in English. The women from Egypt and Pakistan were both fluent in English, and the Pakistani woman used a few words of Urdu during the interview. At the time of the interviews, the Somali woman was enrolled in an English language class at a local college, so sometimes her children had to help translate during the interviews. Additionally, because I am an Arabic speaker, I spoke Arabic initially with the Egyptian family, before the actual interview part began. Each family participated in three or four home visits. The purpose of the first visit was to become acquainted with one another, build trust, make observations, see the setting/neighborhood, and to get permission to continue to record the sessions. The second home visit included questions about the family's history and what practices they follow to survive here in the United States. The third visit focused on the parents' education, what parents learned from the school and the connection between what they learned and what their students learned. I needed to follow up with questions to clarify data and so I did a fourth home visit with the Egyptian and Pakistani families. I added questions specifically related to the current environment between Muslims and Americans and how they viewed being a Muslim in the US.

Each home visit lasted up to three hours. The data collected from the home visits included my field notes, the audiotapes of the interview questions and responses, and transcriptions from taping. The interview questions for the four visits are found in Appendix A.

Interview questions were derived from those Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) prescribed in *Funds of Knowledge*. The questions were organized into three sections. The first section was about the history and background of the family, the second revolved around their labor history and language, and the third inquired about education. I did conduct a fourth interview for two of the three families; these questions were developed by myself.

For each of the three/four interviews, I scheduled a time with them and each interview lasted between one hour and one and a half hours. Field notes related to the interviews were written to document and to connect more interview encounters with the participants (Maxwell, Joseph 2013). These served as another way to support the data. I took field notes immediately after each interview, reflecting about the environment and home within the qualitative boundaries of the study. The last mode of data collection and analysis came from the backpack story.

The Family Story Backpacks and Student Discussions

The backpack project included five backpacks to be given to each of the students to take home weekly to share with their families over the course of eight weeks. Each held a different theme: names, the desert, family, Ramadan, and Muslim traditions. Every backpack contained one piece of global literature and two or three other pieces of literature on the same theme. Each backpack also contained one artifact relating to the theme and a journal and crayons for reflection on the literature. I included candy each time to help motivate the students. The students checked out the backpacks for one week at a time. Students wrote their thoughts and connections to the text they read in a family journal. Some students had help from their parents and some did not.

When the backpacks were returned to me, I made copies of what each student wrote,

gave a copy to the teacher for reference, and then prepared the backpack for the next student.

The students received the backpacks on a rotating schedule. I arranged with the teacher to meet each Friday with the students who had the backpacks at a given time and we held a discussion about what they wrote.

When I discussed the stories from the backpack with the students, most of them were excited, and told me how their siblings and parents helped them read some of the books and write responses. Some students brought the backpacks back on time, and others did not. When we discussed the backpack, the students who were excited about the backpacks shared a lot, and the others who were not as enthusiastic just listened. Through the parents, the children were encouraged, which increased their level of interest and excitement. On the other hand, students whose parents did not speak as much English were perhaps not able to get that level of reinforcement from their parents about reading.

Field Notes in the Classroom

The classroom observations lasted around two hours each and were conducted twice. The purpose of the classroom observations was to get to know the students and to become familiar with them in their classroom setting. I also wanted to understand the culture of the classroom and the relationship of the teacher with the students. Lastly, I wanted to be familiar with the teacher. I was also available to assist the teacher with any supportive tasks. I took field notes to learn more about children's backgrounds and their experiences. I tried to build a relationship with them by participating in their activities, letting them get to know me as well. I observed the classroom and sketched a layout of the room's furniture and walking paths. I took note of the bulletin boards, student work, photos, etc. on the walls. The classroom had a variety of bulletin boards and pictures of other cultures. There were many maps and the teacher used

them often in her instruction.

I also collected field notes after each home visit. I noted the description of the home, the various artifacts present, the smells and lighting of the home, my impression of the family, how they communicated with each other and with me, the clothing worn, and what type of technology was available to them. I took the notes right after finishing the interview so that my impressions were fresh.

Analysis of Data

The data analysis for this study was inductive and featured analyzing observations and interviews to develop codes. According to Maxwell (2012), the first step in qualitative analysis is reading observation notes, interview transcripts, or documents that are to be analyzed. During this process, the author/researcher should write notes and memos on what is seen in the data, and develop tentative ideas about categories. From this point, a researcher has a number of analytic options, and three main points: (1) writing memos based on observations and interviews; (2) categorizing strategies and coding the observations and interviews to try to answer the research questions; and (3) connecting strategies by narrative analysis and providing descriptive information about the context from the data. Data from this study came primarily from semi-structured interviews. Interviews were recorded and transcribed providing 220 pages of transcribed data.

Maxwell (2005) claims “an important set of distinctions in planning your categorizing analysis is between what I call organizational, substantive, and theoretical categories” (p.237). In my analysis, I also used this stratification of analysis. “Organizational categories are generally broad subjects or issues that you establish prior to interviews” (p.237). In this study, the organizational categories included the analysis of the families’ values and opinions toward

education, how they viewed family relationships, their belief in maintaining their mother tongue, how they built the foundation of respect for their children, and how they maintained religious beliefs through practice/ritual. Substantive/theoretical categories are those that allow for some insight to be drawn from the observations and interviews completed (Maxwell, 2005). After careful reading of the transcripts from each interview and backpack story reflections/discussions the first time, I wrote notes on the main concepts being conveyed by the interviewees. During my second pass, I attempted to delineate the details of each category and how the interviewee responses correlated with these. This second pass allowed me to formulate my subcategories or as Maxwell describes, my substantive/theoretical categories, specifically for the themes of maintaining religious practices: the reading of the Qu'ran, the five pillars of Islam *shahada*, *salah*, *zakah*, *saum*, *Eid* and *Hajj*, and the wearing of the veil, *Hijab*. I completed a third pass through the transcripts to solidify the critical themes to be discussed throughout my analysis.

Conclusion

In chapter three, I presented the methodology I used in order to carry out my study, including the demographics of the participants and their families, the school context in which this study took place, the data collection, and the qualitative methodology. I outlined details about the two strategies I used from funds of knowledge theory: the home visits and the family story backpack and related discussion. Toward the end of this section, I mentioned my field notes and explained how I analyzed the data.

Chapter 4: Factors in Funds of Knowledge Approaches

This chapter examines my research questions on the factors that influenced the differences in home visits and the backpacks in exploring funds of knowledge. I rely on my field notes and observations from the home visits to support my data. Meyer and Mann (2006) identify home visits as a means for a teacher to have an initial positive perspective of the student and garner support from parents. When engaging in home visits to understand families' situations, it is very important for teachers to build a collaborative relationship with families. According to Lin and Bates (2010), home visits enable teachers to have experiences with their students and their families to help them comprehend their lives, needs, and students' backgrounds.

The family story backpack was a different strategy for finding funds of knowledge. Because the families are Muslim and come from Africa and Asia, I chose the topics of the backpacks with their culture and religion in mind. The intent was to connect children and their families to their experiences through writing in the journal at home and discussion at school. I believed that the home visit would provide me more details about the funds of knowledge that exist but I was surprised to find an abundance of funds of knowledge in the backpacks as well. Children felt free during the discussion about the backpack to discuss topics in depth. Often, our discussion brought in new topics that I had not considered. The connection between the topics encouraged students to talk about their experiences without confines.

At the end of this chapter, I discuss the concept of the home visit in the KSA and its possible revolutionary impact on Vision 2030. Also discussed are the challenges to be faced during the implementation of the concept of funds of knowledge and alternatives to the home visit that may prove equally valuable.

The Home Visits

Peralta-Nash (2003) found that home visits build a teacher's concepts about students and families. I used two strategies to assess Muslim immigrants' funds of knowledge. The first was the home visit. This strategy was a challenge for me because I had never approached data collection in this manner. In Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005), teachers conducted interviews with three students and their families, which was a significant level of investment. I used the same questions that the teachers used through the project with Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti. I, however, was by myself, but I attempted to follow the same strategy. I did home visits with students to learn more about how to approach the home visit experience.

When I met with parents at school to introduce myself, I met Khalid from Yemen whose wife is Mexican-American. He happily introduced me to her and even welcomed me to visit. But I was surprised to hear when I asked his son to have his father sign a form, that he said, "Sorry my dad can not do it because we are busy." I think he hesitated because he did not trust me. I wondered if it had something to do with the current dynamic between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. I put this aside and continued trying to engage with the parents when they came to pick up their children around 3 in the afternoon. I wanted to talk to introduce them to my project and the idea of home visits.

Aisha's husband, from Somalia, always picked up their children, and so I was able to approach him one afternoon. He said I was welcome, and he showed me his driver's license to get the address. He even allowed me to take a picture of his license even though we were strangers initially. At my first visit, Aisha was not there and I met her husband at the front door. They lived far away, in a nice community, different than what I expected an immigrant family to live in. Because Muslim men and women cannot sit together in the same room, he asked me to

come by the next day and gave me Aisha's phone number. I met her the next day as she spoke to me outside of the front door. After a few moments, she abruptly asked me why I wanted to do this. She also asked for whom was this project and what type of questions she would be asked. I attempted to reassure her by showing her my IRB form and her signature. We stopped our discussion after about 5 minutes. I was not asked inside. Because her English was broken, we struggled to continue, affecting the quality of our conversation. Throughout the transcript of the conversation, I found it hard to transcribe her words, so I asked my native English-speaking friend for help.

In Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005), some of the teachers were bilingual and some were not, but as a group, they were able to work more efficiently. I had to rely on myself. When I returned to Aisha's home, I was invited inside and she was pleased when I presented her with a symbolic Ramadan date. Her home was spacious and well arranged, but I could not understand why all of the windows were draped with dark curtains and the floors covered with big rugs. Scattered throughout were religious quotes posted on walls or propped on tables. The family seemed to be holding on to their culture and religion through their furnishings. Aisha was hesitant at the beginning, and when I asked her if it was okay to record our conversation, she asked me why and who would listen to it. I explained that it was just for me and I would delete it when I finished transcribing it.

Throughout the whole conversation, Aisha was very cautious and didn't offer many details. Her answers were short, both from mistrust and an inability to communicate her thoughts in English. When we finished, she offered me some vegetables they had bought in bulk and had excess. My impression was that the father seemed to be a hard worker, since as immigrants they managed to live in a nice house in a nice neighborhood. However, I did not feel comfortable with

her because I felt she was too cautious with me and the dark environment inside did not help my level of comfort.

On my second home visit, I went to the mosque on a Friday where Aisha regularly volunteered. She showed me how she set up for prayer. On our last visit, she asked me to bring a gold ring from the KSA. I did not understand why she made that request.

Fatima, a Pakistani mother of three girls at the school, was excited to meet me and welcomed me to visit her house. By a request from the second daughter, I gave her children cookies. I also gave Fatima a date. Her house reflected some of her culture. I saw a prayer rug and the house smelled like traditional Pakistani spices. Before entering her home, I encountered a neighbor who complimented Fatima and her family. I immediately held a good impression of Fatima. I explained to Fatima that she had already signed the disclosure form and she said “come on, Noura, I trust you.” She also told me before we started recording, that I should not ask her religious questions. I explained to her that I just had some general questions about religion and hoped that would be okay. Fatima was by far the most comfortable with me and the most flexible in terms of meeting times. She was not overly cautious which allowed for more free-flowing conversation. Her higher education of a Ph. D also allowed us to discuss my project in greater depth.

Sara from Egypt was also welcoming. She lived in a secure and clean apartment complex. Her home was clean and well decorated and because she is Arab, I felt more comfortable with her. I also gave her the date. She did not ask me about the type of questions I would ask and we just dived in. At the end of the interview, she invited me to the feast on the table. She showed me her apartment and her children’s room. Because Sara and I shared a similar culture, I felt at ease, something I did not feel with Aisha or Fatima as much.

I had problems scheduling the home visits with all of the families because of their varying circumstances. I tried to visit one other family, who was Somali, but after the parents gave me their phone number and I explained my research, they sent the paper back with their daughter Hamdi, and said they could not do it because they were busy.

The concept of a home visit may be familiar with American people, but it is not a normality with immigrants. A Muslim woman from a different country than their own, wanting to interview them could seem strange and suspicious, especially in the U.S. The strategy of making home visits nevertheless, helped me to frame the idea of funds of knowledge. By sitting with families and talking about their experiences and sharing our identity as Muslims, I was able to build on their ideas. All of the men, women, and children helped me to learn more about their specific funds of knowledge. During each interview, I took extensive field notes, writing down my findings and the details of each visit. I also asked my interviewees for permission to record the interview. Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) mention that writing field notes can be time consuming, but the act of writing helps to share the insight gained from the visit. That is exactly what I did. I wrote my field notes in their house after I finished the interview or sometimes in the car. It helped me to remember my initial impressions when I was retrospectively analyzing the data. The factors I identified for home visits and interviews are:

Education level

A collaborative relationship with the family

Shared language/dialect

Personal connection or lack there of

Trust/mistrust.

The Family Story Backpacks

Another strategy I used was the family story backpacks to provide another way to discover funds of knowledge. This technique was new to me as well. I spent time learning how to model this strategy as best as possible. With collaboration from my co-chairs, I decided on five core backpack topics to discuss with the children. When meeting with the children, I explained how they could use the books and materials in there. I sent the backpack home with a note attached, outlining the details of the project. When I did the home visits, I explained this to the parents again. According to Short and Fox (2003), young people should have regular, meaningful engagement with high-quality children's books that are culturally authentic and accurate. Through the interactive material in each backpack, I offered parents the chance to share their own experiences as they applied to each story. This furthered my understanding of the funds of knowledge that existed within each family.

The children seemed to enjoy the concepts coming from the backpack and they were excited to take it home and begin. The variety of topics connected to Muslim culture and gave the children a chance to write and discuss their experiences freely. The challenge I faced with the backpack, however, was that some of the children did not return the backpacks on time and I had to wait extensive periods of time for them to return the backpack and hear their experiences.

Some of the children forgot the backpack at school while others were eager to bring it home each time. I encouraged the children by surprising them with treats in order to get them to finish the work. Some of the children were not able to get help from their parents with writing and reading from the backpack. Some children would read just one of the four books. Some would simply read the books and write a summary instead of a reflection, which provided me with little data. I rotated the backpacks with the children according to a scheduled rotation.

The teacher was extremely helpful in notifying me when a student returned the backpack, she would send me a message to come and pick it up. In the beginning, I met the children at 11 am but when a test was coming up she asked me to change the day and time. The situation was flexible. She also provided me with time to discuss each backpack with the children and sometimes she engaged with us as well in order for her to learn about the children's background. When I recorded our conversations, the children were amused and often played with the recorder. I would gather their attention by asking them to read what they wrote and facilitated discussions that opened up new avenues to explore. I noticed that some parents also shared their experiences in the written journal entries. This greatly contributed to my analysis of the data. Sara, for example, shared her experiences on every topic. Siblings also included themselves in the writing and reading. I saw this during my home visit with Samera, I witnessed her ask for help reading the story from her elder sister.

The backpacks also provided a forum for the children and parents to gather. One student's mother explained, "Hassan and I read." The student corroborated, "me and my mom really enjoying." Athbah combined both Arabic and English when relaying her personal experiences. At the end of our shared collaboration, the students asked their teacher if they could compile all of their written experiences into one big book that each of them could take home. This convinced me that the experience was rewarding for us both. At the end of each discussion, I would make copies of the journal entries and give the teacher a copy. In the end, however, it was our discussion of the backpacks that provided me with the most valuable data for enhancing my theories on Muslim immigrants' funds of knowledge. The factors related to the backpacks are:

The theme of the backpack story

The child's ability to return the backpack

The quantity of parent-Child interaction

Trust, Confianza

Gonzalez, Moll, Amanti (2005) assert that “confianza,” or trust, is an important theory when building interpersonal relationships in different cultures. The home visit is not a new pedagogical idea in the United States, but funds of knowledge does uncover the practices, educations, cultures, and backgrounds of families, providing teachers with new connections to consider in the classroom (Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti, 2005).

Throughout my research, I understood that trust was important in dealing with the parents. I wanted to give the parents a sense of comfort and safety by introducing myself first and meeting them face-to-face during a particularly special holiday, Eid. When I did home visits, I brought the symbolical date to each home as a way of connecting us both to a mutual culture. Aisha, in the beginning was hesitant to bring me inside her home. But, by the last home visit, she felt comfortable enough to ask me if I could bring her a gold ring from the KSA. This give me the impression that she trusted me, that we had built a connection. Fatima showed her trust in me by putting little emphasis on filling out the technical forms for my research: “ I trust you Noura,” she would reiterate. Salem, the man from Somalia, when asked about his home address for the home visit, offered me his driver's license and the opportunity to snap a photo of it for convenience.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) mention how an open trust between teacher and parent will support a student's achievement. My goal as well was to build trust in order to better engage with families during the home visit. Others never came around to trusting me. When I met Khaled's father from Yemen at the school, he was initially very welcoming me and invited me to his

house. I am unsure of why he suddenly changed his mind and refused to sign the consent forms for my research. He continued to avoid me at the school when he came to pick up his son. I came to terms with this rejection and mistrust for I realized that without a mutual respect and trust, little would be gained from our conversations. According to Gonzalez, Mall and Amanti (2005) trust was important in the Hispanic society they worked with in terms of their interaction and exchange.

Discussion

Bourdieu (1986) expands on the meaning of social capital. Within this particular functioning social group, Muslim immigrants, I was able to draw on the many shared normalities, identities, trusts and relationships in each of the families and as a collective group as well. Because the families were all immigrants, their sentiments towards me and this entire process were more conservative. I felt that home visits were a good way to connect the funds of knowledge present at school, home and in the community. Visiting the families in their place of comfort allowed for a more intimate connection that would not have been possible at the mosque or in a coffee shop. According to Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005), personal contact with community members facilitates strong communication and relationships of trust among parents, students and the teachers. Epstein (2011) claims that home visits offer a bridging between the school atmosphere and the home and neighborhood atmosphere. It is an opportunity for meetings, allowing families to understand schools and for schools to understand families.

When I came to the U.S., my children's school asked for a home visit. I did not understand this concept, but granted permission. The two teachers came to my house and asked me questions pertaining to our culture. I enjoyed the concept of home visits and as a mother, I was reassured about my children's education, food, and activities. I felt I had developed a strong

relationship with the school. The National Parent Teacher Association Standards for Parent/Family Involvement (2010) states: “Effectively engaging parents and families in the education of their children has the potential to be far more transformational than any other type of education reform” (p.17). When I started the program at the University of Arizona and read the book Funds of Knowledge, I particularly dwelled on the strategy of finding funds of knowledge through home visits.

Home visits are a new concept in the KSA and I feel that it may be rejected for several reasons. First, the relationship between the school system and family is inflexible. Parents have little access to their child’s teacher and often must go through a chain of hierarchy before being able to address a simple issue with the instructor. According to custom, males and females are segregated. So as a mother, I would not be able to attend my son’s school or even make a phone call. I would be refused discussion with a male counterpart. Secondly, some people in the KSA would view the idea as an intrusion on their privacy.

I particularly like the idea because I am curious to know more about the funds of knowledge in different cultures within the same society. The variety of cultures in the KSA encourages me to propose the idea of the home visit. I believe that people who live in non-urban settings may be more willing to accept the idea of welcoming teachers into the home and parents into the school. This may simply be due to the construction of the school itself. Schools in the city are barricaded with tall walls and gates while schools in the outskirts are minimally populated and the school is small and more open. When I did home visits with families here in Arizona, the families for the most part were very open and welcoming. They did not view the home visit as an interference. In the KSA, the attendance of a teacher to their home will be an extravagant occasion requiring lots of preparation: cleaning, dinner, etc.

Teacher may have concerns about this idea. Some of the female teachers may simply not get permission from their patriarch. In North Texas, sixty teachers, between pre-K and 6th grade, each selected one student with behavioral problems and conducted a home visit. The teachers were apprehensive about participating in home visits, often fearing for their safety (Stetson, Stetson, Sinclair & Nix, 2012). I believe this to be a natural reaction but with better awareness and explanation of the process, teachers may feel more equipped to handle themselves and to attain all the information they need. I too had hesitations about the home visit. I worked hard to introduce myself fully to each of the parents and their children. I would reiterate the purpose of my project often and assure them of their anonymity and value to my research.

According to Stetson, Stetson, Sinclair and Nix (2012), teachers who perform home visits, assert that these visits increase success of student academic achievement. By visiting the home, the school establishes a positive rapport with the families and students who in turn, feel more invested. Vygotsky (1978) mentions the community's role in improving learning as well. In the KSA, if the ministry offers incentives for teachers to conduct home visits, then expanding this idea may be possible. The Vision 2030 focuses on education as a partnership between the home, family and community. Home visits could be critical to this vision.

The backpacks are another resource in finding funds of knowledge. This may be a more accessible approach to involving community and family in education in the KSA. Dworin (2006) asserts that by gathering reflections on experiences through a backpack, the mother, father, uncles and grandparents help their children improve their biliteracy and in addition allow for a communal experience in learning. This will allow a teacher to have access and understanding of the children's' funds of knowledge. The concept of the backpack can be easily implemented in KSA compared to the concept of the home visit.

Zipin (2009) proposes another strategy in identifying funds of knowledge. A teacher may ask students to bring in cultural artifacts from their homes and discuss their importance to them personally. This strategy may work in KSA but teachers should be educated on how to ask questions that specifically inquire about the students' funds of knowledge. In addition, Zipin (2009) mentions the idea of dark funds of knowledge in his study. This is an excellent way for me to discover more about the difficulties that students face in life in KSA. Saudi society is conservative and their line of thinking can be narrow and stringent. Human rights and the rights of children exist but are not strongly regulated. Allowing the dark funds of knowledge to surface in schools in a safe environment may provide a pathway to implementing a better infrastructure for ensuring children's safety. The theory of funds of knowledge is not just a means of finding dark or light funds of knowledge. It travels deeper. Through this theory, we can better understand why a particular society functions the way it does and what the roots of their problems may be, particularly as related to children.

Conclusion

Chapter four focused on the research questions about the factors of funds of knowledge and the various ways it can be approached. The first of two questions are answered with my analysis of the home visits and stories gleaned from the backpacks sent home with the students I interviewed. Also, I talked about the concept of *confianza*, or trust, which is from *Funds of Knowledge* (Moll, Amanti, and Gonzalez, 2005). My findings in this chapter allow for more understanding about the strategies I used and how these strategies allow for new perspectives from each of the participants.

Chapter 5: Funds of Knowledge in Muslim Families

This chapter explores my research questions about the funds of knowledge available in Muslim families. According to Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005), the concept of funds of knowledge is based on a simple premise: people have knowledge and their life experiences are what give them that knowledge. Researchers of funds of knowledge focus on understanding the details, the processes of life and lived experiences of people. They learned to value how people use resources of all kinds to live their lives, drawing on personal funds of knowledge to a large extent. With this analysis, I wanted to identify the funds of knowledge Muslim immigrants draw on that enable them to survive in the U.S., as well as the kinds of resources they use to help them in the process.

All of the families I interviewed were Muslim, and thus I expected Islam would hold a significant place in their lives. My analysis indicated that the value of education, the significance of family relationships, maintenance of maternal tongue, deference to other cultures, and the continuation of religious practices were all fundamental components of the Muslim immigrants' funds of knowledge. I learned that they were all rooted in the religion of Islam. Each of these themes are discussed in this chapter along with the data from the home visits and the backpacks.

Hitchcock (2005) states that the five pillars of Islam are the shared framework for the practices that Muslims follow. From the interviews, I learned that all of the families follow the five pillars.

In addition, Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) mention how *confianza*, 'the trust in mutual trust' exists in their research and how that allowed them to interact with people at a more intimate level. This 'trust in mutual trust' was of more concern to me than any other aspect of my

interviews. I found that every family was different, depending on their journey to the present place and time. Some families were more cautious because, as Muslim refugees from Somalia and Yemen, their situation was different and more complicated than they wanted to reveal. Some families did not allow me to engage in their life, even though they welcomed me and the greater purpose of my research initially. This further corroborates Moran's (2004) comment of how important it is to build trusting environments between the school, parents, and students for the greater good of student achievement.

Value of Education for the Future

Because of the difficulty of life for refugees, education is essential for allowing them the possibility of a better life. They know that education is so important for them and for their children because it helps them learn expertise, think critically, and build upon rudimentary knowledge. It improves their prospects of earning income and moving out of poverty. Because of this, I found that most of the Muslim families strongly wanted their children to have a good education and cited many reasons why.

The first reason is that Islam invites people to learn and study the Qur'an. Muslim people believe that Allah requires them to learn.

ابْرَأَقْ اِ كَق {1} ق س هَ َ {2} وَ {3} مَرْكَلَا كَ لَ لَقَا كَ
 م ب نِ ا ل ل ا ن ل ا ن ل ا ن ل ا ن ل ا ن
 س ر ي خ خ ل ا ن ع
 م ي ذ ا َ {4} م
 ل م
 ل ا س هَ ل ا س هَ
 م ل م ل
 ن
 (surah Al 'Alaq 30
 يْعَلْم {5})

In these verses, Allah commands that humans read, and he commands this three times.

The verse shows how important education is for the human race. Most Muslim people have strong beliefs and faith and they consider education to be a type of worship. In addition, through education, Muslim people learn to read the Qur'an and to interpret it, further strengthening their faith. These immigrants speculate that the life they are likely to endure in the United States may be trying, and that's why they focus on giving their children a good education to ameliorate the difficulty. My research revealed that the families I interviewed encourage their children to strive for higher and higher accreditation. They give them the freedom to choose their future career paths as well. For example, one Pakistani family boasted three generations of doctoral level education. I was proud to interview the family and to understand more of their background. All of Fatima's family members and her spouse's family members have doctorates, and because of this, they have good jobs that provide for their families. As she was talking about her husband's family:

My husband's father, he is a retired judge... [his wife] has graduated with a Bachelor's of Science... She lived in dorm, so she is very well educated lady...

The eldest sister is a pediatrician. She is a doctor, too. And then, after that, is like a, sister, she's a fashion designer... his youngest brother, he is a PhD from the UK.

That is just for the spouse's family. They value education, which is a value that they have passed down. Her husband's mother's family sent her out of the city to study when she was a young girl, something rather unheard of in Pakistan at that time, which shows the level of dedication their family had to education. They continue to pass down that value from one generation to the next. Fatima said "So, although her parents belong to Relalia, but they have

sent her for education in Lahore”. It seems they believe being educated at a higher level will guarantee a good future.

Fatima also talked about her family members. She said:

I’m a doctor. My younger sister, she is a doctor. She is a psychiatrist, and her husband is a plastic surgeon... And then my third, my brother, he is a civil engineer... My fourth brother, he’s here in the U.S., and he has done his education from University of Birmingham... Then, my fifth, is my sister. She is seventeen years, doing all levels in Pakistan.

On both sides of the family, education has created tremendous improvement in their lives. The children also strive for greatness as they watch their parent’s success and in turn they encourage them wholeheartedly. The value of continuing education is considered a fund of knowledge that they pass down to their children. When Fatima asked her children, the children said they wanted to acquire a doctorate in their chosen field of study.

I think the kids should learn everything, but I’m not that liberal thinking. They should know everything. If she [my daughter] wants to be a fashion designer, I want her to be a doctor. If she herself is saying, she wants to be a physician like my dad.

From this quote, I see two items of importance. First, not just is education important, but rather, the fund of knowledge is the value of attaining the highest level of education as well as a degree. Fatima would like to see her child become a doctor, which is a desire that stems from her family history. Secondly, all of her children wish to go on to higher education, like their family members. Fatima was influenced by her parents to reach a high degree of education, and wants to pass that along to her children. For example, she said, “but number two, I want them to be fully

educated. In case, they can be, so they be independent. I want them to be independent, with values, like with effort in every type of circumstances.”

Through education, Fatima looks forward to a promising future for her children. Muslim immigrants in the United States want to survive and live a good life and this particular family thinks that becoming highly educated will satisfy this beyond measure. Through my experience living in the U.S., higher education can lead not only to a more balanced life, but also a healthier life. With higher educational credentials, it will be easier to find a job than those who have not completed some form of higher education. This parent also realizes that tertiary education may help her children to become more sensitive to cultural differences and to have more respect for other beliefs and cultures. In addition, it broadens the set of career options for them and increases their potential to work in different countries if they so desire.

Another parent I interviewed was part of a Somali family. Aisha studies at school to learn English, and is also responsible for taking care of the home as well as their nine children. Learning the English language is critical for survival in the United States. For example, she said, “He take me to school I know I had to learn it. But then when I got pregnant, I stayed home. This is why I stopped. Two years, four years, I stayed home.” It is clear that Aisha believes that by studying English, she can survive in the U.S.

When I asked her about her children’s future, she said, “I like to be a teacher, or everything they want...Doctor... nursing, engineering... lawyer. Different things.” She is aware of the difficulties that refugees face living in the United States. Due to this, she allows her children more freedom to study what they want. I noticed that the careers she mentioned are difficult, ambitious choices, which means they value education and understand how it contributes to them thriving in the U.S.

Through my experience in the U.S., I have found that many of my Muslim immigrant friends strongly encourage their children to get a good education because they know how important it is to have a good life. Their circumstances and their struggles create these particular funds of knowledge. It is of importance to me, that the value of education to Muslims in the KSA can be compared to that of Muslim immigrants in the U.S. I believe there is a struggle between the power and influence that monetary worth (via business practices) provides compared to intelligence's worth.

Aisha chooses not to send her children to the nearby public school. She believes Al fajir Islamic School is a good school for learning, especially for children of Muslim immigrants because in addition to basic school curriculum, they teach them the Qu'ran and Islamic studies. She continues despite the increased travel time to and from the school compared to the local public school. When asked about the distance between the school and home and why she continues to take the time, she says, "Because they are learning... Maybe 30 minutes maybe 35." Although the distance is farther, it is worth it because she believes that the school is a good school for her children. Aisha is sacrificing more of her family's time and money, in order to provide her children with what she believes is a quality education. This speaks to how important she believes learning is for herself and her children. This is especially interesting, because her parents in Somalia never attended school and are illiterate. Despite education not being passed down in her family, she still understands how it is of value for her children. Different circumstances help to birth new funds of knowledge.

The other interviewee from Egypt, Sara, is currently working as a physical therapist, and claims the following about education:

Well, we're just very big on education, so... it is very important to us...

Hopefully, our kids will enjoy being educated, want to learn more... schools encourage kids to like learning.

In Sara's case, education is a family value that has been passed down from her parents as well as her spouse's parents. "So, my parents, both of them, bachelors degree, the same, college level, bachelor's." Because education is so important to her and her family, the interviewee yearns for her children to be well educated as well.

In addition to traditional learning environments, these families all take their children to the library to improve their children's reading skills and to kindle a commitment to reading and books. This is an excellent way to cultivate a love of learning in their children. When I asked Fatima what kinds of activities her family does with the children to help them learn, she responded: "yeah, every weekend, they go to the library, mostly with their father. And I do some work".

Sara encourages her daughter to read by borrowing books from the library.

Yeah, for a while, we were renting, and we were like, taking books of the library... or we would sit and read then take the rest home, have them for three weeks or so, and then return them. She used to love that.

Aisha also responded in the affirmative when I asked her if she went to the library with her children.

Libraries are vital, as they give people the opportunity to educate themselves. By going to the library and checking out books, children are able to read about topics that interest them and help them gain curiosity about a world they know so little about. It is of critical importance that local communities value and continue to fund children's libraries and understand their benefits to the children and their families globally. Each child should be familiar and comfortable with their

local library. The 21st century has brought many challenges and yet many opportunities. It is the purpose of the practitioners of the public library service to make sure that children have the best start in their reading and learning skills (IFLA, 2005).

Because Allah in the Quran commands people to learn, Muslim families believe that education is important, and each of the families exemplified this in different ways. For an immigrant family, it is their previous struggle that calls them to value education so highly. While in the U.S., I noticed that there are public libraries throughout each city. By having this space available to the public, families are encouraged to visit it and read.

In KSA, the concept of the public library does not exist as it does in the U.S. It seems to me that the significance of the public library is its ability to encourage people to explore other parts of the world, which in turn helps them to be open-minded. This is what the Saudis need, especially in order to fulfill the goals of Vision 2030.

Both the Pakistani and the Egyptian families place their faith in education and its power therefore exemplifying it as one of their funds of knowledge. In raising their children, they try to pass on those values in them as well. Education can even become a new tradition that will be passed down to future generations, as it never once was. Despite the fact that Aisha's family is not formally educated, she continues to encourage her children to attend school and learn to love it when they came to the U.S. This cultivates, for the children, a new value that will be passed down to future generations.

Educating generations for the future is a fund of knowledge for the current families themselves because of the changing circumstances. For example, in Aisha's family, formal education was once not valued because of extenuating circumstances (i.e. poverty, cultural beliefs), but because they are now in the U.S., life is different. Circumstances have forced them

to find merit in formal education in order to build a better future for their children and their family. They have birthed a new fund of knowledge and education could now become a strongly held, passed on tradition of this family.

Similarly, this will influence the various responsibilities given and acknowledged by each class as is described in *Responsibility in Childhood*. For example, the Somalian family came to the US with very little and had to work to become middle class. This experience will affect what values they will instill in their children and what responsibilities they believe a child should hold. This is in comparison to the Egyptian and Pakistani families who had some inherited wealth and higher education levels. This will heavily impact the values they want their children to have. Therefore, categorizing based on social class is a helpful approach for looking at how to improve students' education, particularly for minority students.

Because all of the immigrant families interviewed came from different countries with varying levels of wealth, their level of educational achievement helped define their success in the US as is delineated in *Unequal Childhoods*. They have been able to work hard and succeed despite their struggles; but in their children, they instill the value of education so that they may have success at a lesser cost.

Education has many advantages: it is the key to being independent. It teaches children good values and skills that immigrant children may not have otherwise. According to all of the interviewees, they teach their children to be independent through education. With this in mind, and with the additional value of my own experience when I came to the U.S, I realize how education can be considered a fundamental value of life. I feel that it is so important to raise my children in this manner. When I moved from the KSA, I did not feel this way. I viewed education as a means to an end: go to school in order to get a job. Through my journey, I learned to value

education more highly and developed a desire to educate my children, as did Aisha, Fatima, and Sara. Different circumstances have created new funds of knowledge in my life, as well.

Significance of Family Relationships

Muslim people maintain strong relationships with their families throughout their lives. They believe it is another religious duty that Allah commands them to do. In the Quran, Allah stressed that people should be together. In order to follow his directive, Muslim people gather the family together, communicate and unite despite being outside of their native home (Ibn-Katheer). This in itself is a form of worship. Being together as one is important, and the families I interviewed try to teach their children the very significance of this.

Not all of the family members of Aisha's family are in the U.S. When I asked Aisha about her family, she said, "They live in Africa" and she communicates with them by talking on the phone. Her husband's family lives in the U.S. "His family is here. We have a lot of friends. It is good." Despite the thousands of miles between Aisha and her family, she strives to maintain a healthy connection, not only with her family abroad, but by creating new roots here in the U.S.

Fatima also communicates with her family by visiting and calling. She always tries to keep in touch with them. When I asked her if she saw them, she said, "Yeah, they visited us almost every year or two. Especially my husband's parents. They visited almost every year." Her family visits them, too. "Yeah, well, this is the first time that two years has passed, otherwise, I see them every year I visited them." When I asked about calling them, she said "Yeah, I call my mother daily." This response did not surprise me. I was also raised in a society that places high value on maintaining communication with one another, especially family. In the U.S., I noticed that the importance of family gatherings and communicating regularly is not regarded as a normality as it is in my society.

One of the children, Khalid, often asked to be excused from reading all the storybooks because when his father came home, he had to stop working and kiss his father's hand and forehead. This is common in Arab culture and is a form of respect for the father and other family members. The discussion helped me to understand the home practices as connected to funds of knowledge. I am also Muslim, however, and I, and my people, strongly believe in Allah's command of congregation. It is our duty. As a child, and even now, my parents encourage me to visit family members, especially my grandparents. As a mother of two, passing down this tradition of family and community is necessary.

Communication with family will endure and strengthen these relationships. Muslim immigrants miss their families, so communication is necessary for them and their children to maintain their family relationships. Sara shares in this experience of familial obligation. Her family lives in another state and they keep in touch by visiting each other. "Yeah, we visit, maybe every four or five months". Her husband's family lives even farther away, in other countries, but some of his family members will visit them here in the U.S. soon. "There's one in Australia, and one in Egypt... and they're both coming to visit her."

Family relationships with those who are far away are not perpetuated through communication alone via phone. It is also by hosting family gatherings and teaching children the importance of commitment. Family gatherings are another way to enhance bonding and to deepen relationships. The combination of uniting a community sharing a similar connection and incorporating food and laughter, allowed me to see that the children were excited about family gatherings. They were not just an obligation. When I discussed families using the backpacks with children, they always mentioned visiting their grandparents, and that they consider visiting them to be a duty. I chose the theme of one backpack story as "Family Gatherings," to encourage

children to talk about how important it is to keep family relationships strong.

As Muslims, we celebrate the holy month of Ramadan and Eid. Ramadan is the best time for families to be together, and through the discussion of their experiences with the backpack, the children explained how excited they were about it. Because Ramadan was coming soon, it was the ideal time to talk about family relationships with the children and to see their excitement grow as our discussion did. Ramadan and Eid are holidays that strengthen relationships within the family by allowing the love they have for one another to come through and by meeting for meals regularly during this month; a communal feast, something that otherwise may not have happened. The feasting during Ramadan is a prized ritual. It is considered to be a religious practice for Muslim people to do from religious duty and even more so because of pure enjoyment. Eid is also another reason to bring the family together. Allah makes these holidays as fundamental reasons to communicate and unite with family members.

Being together as a family is not just to have a good relationship with one's family. It is also about religious practices and duty. The Muslim families I met raise their children and teach them through Islam. Ramadan, Eid, and family unification were all topics intertwined with each other. Through the backpack on Ramadan and in speaking with the children of the refugees, I learned that by celebrating Ramadan together, Muslim families were allowed a regular means of maintaining togetherness. For example, Ali wrote in the family journal, "the celebration of Ramadan brings family together to share meals, to help the needy... Celebration of Ramadan means special clothing, traditional food, many memories with family."

The child's mother in the quote above echoes sentiments about Ramadan that I ruminated on as well. Ramadan is an important time for the family to be together. Even the children know how important it is for the family to be together during this time. Sami, a second grader from

Pakistan explained how his family gets together during Ramadan and Eid: “ I also go to the Masjid for *Eid* prayer. Then I got to my grandma’s to meet all my relatives. At my grandma’s house we eat and play together. I go to my uncle’s house when he invited us for *iftar*. We eat and play together.” According to Sami, Ramadan and Eid are important times for his family to pray and be together. Muslim people use their religious practices to teach their children how to preserve century long traditions so that they may pass them down onto future generations.

Sara from Egypt used the Bedouin people as an example of a community with close family ties, and how they are rarely apart from family. “They were divided into tribes and families worked very closely together.” When she writes about her experience with the backpack on family, she wrote, “When there are many extended members of the family, all present at the house at the same time, they become one family. When two people marry, the families become one.” When children witness the amicable alliance amongst the family members, they feel the strength of these family ties. This backpack story revealed responses on family as an important fund of knowledge, especially for Muslim refugees away from home.

The significance of family relationships, however, is not limited to just communication or family gatherings. Names also play a part in keeping the family united. Most Muslim people inherit their names, either from men and women significant throughout Islamic history, or through other family customs and traditions. For example, the name “Mohammed,” is famous because of the prophet Mohammed. Muslims hold him in high esteem; he embodies closeness to Allah. So they name their children Mohammed as a form of respect and in hopes that his future holds some blessings and goodness, as did Mohammed’s. In addition, in KSA, fathers and mothers call themselves ‘father of Mohammed’ or ‘mother of Mohammed’, if their son is named Mohammed, thereby allowing a name of importance to be used not only in the new generation

but in the former as well. This shows how important name inheritance is in both circumstances. Because Muslims are so proud of their religion and of their strong faith, they often use famous members of Islam's history as names for their children. In addition, some names are inherited from an elderly beloved family member, as a means to honor them. For example, my mother called me Noura because it was her mother's name. She named my younger sister, Monera, after my father's mother. During the discussion of the backpack story involving Naming, Hassan said, "They call me Hassan because grandfather name's Hassan." By reusing the names from one generation to the next, Muslim families create and strengthen bonds to keep them unified through time.

Maintaining Their Home Language

Al fajir Islamic School teaches Arabic classes, religious practices, and the study of the Qur'an to children. Families choose to send their children to this school because it is an Islamic school that allows them to learn the basics of their religion and heritage through study of the Qur'an and its religious practices. Muslim people who do not speak Arabic try to learn Arabic in order to read the Qur'an in its original written word. When I did a home visit at Fatima's house, they spoke English, but I overheard foreign words. When I asked her about it, Fatima said she was speaking Urdu, their native language from Pakistan and that she tried to maintain her home language by teaching her kids her home language as well. "I speak in Urdu... They are bilingual. They are mostly speaking in English.. If I don't understand something I say, 'Sunya, speak in Urdu' (laughs)."

Even though her children are young and study in the U.S., Fatima tries to preserve their home language. "They take class on Skype, Qur'an. I think for, 3-4 years, he is teaching them on Qur'an. I ask them to take 1 or 2 classes on Urdu each week." When I asked her about the books

her children have, she said, “They are all in English.” Because I knew the mother treasured Urdu, I asked her why she did not have more books in Urdu. She said “No, their grandmother once brought them Urdu storybooks. But, even my mother brought some Urdu storybooks.”

Sara also encourages her children to learn Arabic for several reasons. Firstly, she considers the Arabic language to be their mother tongue as an Egyptian. Secondly, it is important because the Qur’an is written originally in Arabic. “In Arabic, she’s now learning. She’s improved a lot this year.” By having books in Arabic at home, there is corroboration of the parents’ stated priorities of wanting to maintain their home language. When I asked her if her daughter had Arabic books, she said, “Yes, she does.”

Sara also protects her language by striving to speak both the languages at home with her husband and children:

I would have preferred to speak only Arabic at home, so that they can speak it perfect...because they know they’ll get that out. But we’re working on it [small laugh]... I would definitely just speak Arabic.

Each of the Muslim families I met has different ways of prolonging the use of their home language. For example, Sara said, “I saw, basically, they learn, they listen to a lot of Islamic songs, like ... Anasheed, yeah.” Listening to the Qur’an is another technique. “Yeah, and the same with Qur’an. They’ll say it very well, the way they hear it and it helps her memorize more when she understands.” Anasheed is a group of religious songs for children and some Muslim families use the Anasheed to teach their children the language and the behavior they should emulate.

Reading and listening to Qur’an serves double duty: it is another method of keeping the home language alive, and simultaneously teaches religious practices. According to Sara, it is

important to learn the Qur'an "so when she hears it right, she can say it perfect... yeah, so that's why it's really important to know, yeah." Sara really wants her daughter to speak Arabic well. "Yes, I definitely want her to speak Arabic well. This is our language, I want her to be able to converse pretty fluently." The significance of studying and reading Quran is apparent within the families I met. This is similar to my experience when I was with my family in the U.S. My children did not speak Arabic very well, because while in the U.S., I wanted them to learn English. Arabic would be there when they returned home. They would even teach me new words in English. I still read the Quran out loud to them often in Arabic to remind them of its significance.

Sara explains her reasoning for keeping Arabic in the home. She wants her children to be able to read and understand the Qur'an without translation, "but the most important is Qur'an, so if all fails, and she cannot have a full conversation... her reading Qur'an and being able to understand it is important."

To a Muslim, the Qur'an is important to analyze and read. The Muslim families I met were all very focused on teaching children the Qur'an both through reading and through listening. By telling stories in Arabic, they become accustomed to hearing and understanding the language. "My husband does tell them in Arabic," Sara said.

Another way to keep the home language alive is to speak Arabic while interacting with members of the extended household, especially those who don't speak English. For example, Sara said, "Yes, our in-laws, because they know no English at all, so they do translate, or they'll teach them some words." The grandmother, the grandfather and the other family members without English-speaking capabilities introduce new words into the children's vocabulary and allows them a means of communication and connection to their elders.

Through the backpack on names, Ali, a Yemeni-American, mentions that he practices Arabic at home with his father. Ali's motivation is to learn Arabic in order to communicate with his friends in Arabic-speaking countries. His father, therefore, keeps teaching him more at home. During our discussions, the children asked me to practice Arabic with them. When the backpack stories were completed, the children even used Arabic words as a means of expressing their personal backpack story.

Aisha tries to maintain Somali, her tongue, in a different way. When I asked her if she wanted her children to speak the home language, she said, "uh-huh, because it is my language." They learn the home language by telling stories in Somali. "Yes, sometimes... because they ask sometimes, they say, when you were born, tell me." In this case, the children do not learn Somali by reading and writing but instead by storytelling. Aisha was not as committed as the other mothers in attempting to maintain reading and writing in the home language. She relies more on oral learning to educate. When asked about books in Somali, she denies having any. They were all in English.

Teaching Children to Respect Other Cultures

If Muslim people have strong faith in the Qur'an and wish to abide by its rules, Allah calls for people to greet, acknowledge and respect not only people within their own tribes but outside of them as well. Allah also asks that people refrain from mockery of others. Respect and love of others is important (Ibn-Kather). The Muslim families I met teach their children to be respectful, especially in the U.S., because of the vastly different cultures and religions. In discussion of the backpack on family with the children, Athbah, an Egyptian-American, claimed that, "when I saw someone who looked different than me and I was okay with it." Her parents have successfully taught her to respect people though they look nothing like her. Respect is

taught with the Qur'an. Sara says, "we as a community need to love our religions and need to act up on our beliefs and our religion teaches us. Show people who we are by our good actions." By following Qur'an and respecting others, Sara tries to give other people a good impression of Islam. In the U.S., some people have negative associations with Islam, and Muslim people try to improve these negative stereotypes. "We need to learn to accept who we are even if we are different. Being a Muslim in a place that views Islam as a negative thing is not easy." She and many other Muslim people are aware of the denigrating perspectives about them, but that pushes them, even more, to respect others. They then teach children from a young age, that equality is important and "... they also need to learn from a young age that there are people who are different than them and that is okay. Most importantly, they need to treat everyone as they would."

When I was with my children in the U.S., I realized that they were surrounded by different cultures and this scared me in the beginning. As a mother, I wanted to envelop them in the Arab culture and religion untouched by 'Americans.' But then, I adapted to our life in the U.S. I had to learn how to respect and understand other cultures and then I taught my children the same. This was a big change for me. I come from a society that believes they are the best because they are Muslim. They do not necessarily believe they should respect others. The Qur'an does not state this directly but some religious individuals and schoolteachers hold different interpretations of the Quran. I have studied under these people and believed the same. But as I evolved over time, I came to understand that these interpretations were just that, interpretations. The meaning of Quran is written. Living in the U.S. has further helped me consider equality and respect. My children have also learned the concepts of equality and respect while in the U.S. through communicating with other children and through their teachings in school. Muslim families, who never needed

equality and respect before, now focus on understanding others. They know that in the U.S. the variety of cultures and religions demand deference as does their own. While teaching children to be respectful, they try to show them equity as well.

This respect can be built across generations as well. Fatima observed the relationship between her Pakistani mother and father: “ I have experienced my father. He is very practicing of religious experience, but he is very down to earth and gentle. I have never seen a more gentle man in my life.” The relationship at home affects the way children are raised in the future. His gentleness and quiet respect, is something Fatima understands and values. She added, “Every time he goes to the office, he calls my mother, my mother twice, do you need anything? He is very nice, very family-oriented, mashallah.”

Being respectful is a cherished value in Muslim families and they inherit some of this behavior from their home environment. When I asked Fatima about how she wants her children to behave, she said, “They should know how to reply and when to reply. They should be more respectful towards others, and give their opinion of family, but respectfully, with logic.” She is teaching her children to be confident and yet still respectful. By practicing respect at home and by expecting respect from the children she is able to teach them through example. In order to teach children respect, the respect needs to be modeled around them among family members.

Children need to be shown that respect as well. For example, Fatima said, if they ask something, I try to answer it, harshly, softly, firmly, or whatever. I cannot ignore it, so we should not ignore their questions, and the parents, they follow the parents subconsciously... Sometimes I’m making an argument with my husband, and I’m thinking, I’m losing control, then I just give a sign, so we can discuss that thing afterwards.

Fatima does not want the children to emulate anything she does not want them to practice outside of the home.

Aisha tries to teach her children respect as well. When I asked her, how she teaches her children, she said, “I teach how to, I tell them how they say Good morning, how they make good students, I tell them.” Also, when I asked her about how they behave, she said “they are respectful.”

Respect contributes to a child’s confidence and his or her ability to be themselves, which, in turn, is instrumental to building strong relationships with others. Islam calls people to respect others and with the analysis obtained through these Muslim families, it is clear that they follow that directive. Everyone should be respected in Islam including young people; it calls for them to be shown respect so they can gain confidence and, in turn, it is important that younger people listen to and respect their elders.

Respecting the elderly is a moral value in Islam. Showing respect to society at large is important as well. There are many ways to show this respect: greeting people, even if you don’t know them, visiting patients, giving advice, going to funerals, are just some of the ways in which a Muslim can show respect. These are all things that Islam requires of a devotee. Muslim families try to keep all of these obligations in mind and honor them respect for individuals and for the Quran (Ibn-Katheer).

Maintaining Religious Beliefs and Practices

Islam has many religious practices, such as praying at the mosque, fasting, zakah, hajj, omrah, and many others. While collecting data, my timing was fortuitous because Ramadan was coming soon. The children and their parents were excited to talk about their religious practices. All of the topics covered in the backpack on Ramadan were heavily associated with Muslim

culture and practice. All of the Muslim families I met held adamantly to their traditional religious practices. They strongly believe what the Qur'an says and the traditions it dictates. They also teach their children to maintain those practices, and pass them down to future generations. Islam is the center, the pillar, of the family home. According to Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005), religion plays an important role in families by allowing them to adapt during difficult times, by providing family members with things in common and a sense of connection to tradition through rituals and ceremonies. Being Muslim today in the U.S. is hard considering all of the current events.

This difficulty can make it difficult to engage in American culture and to "fit in," despite having the chance. Through a common religion, Muslims can unite and work through this difficulty.

Reading the Quran

Muslims strengthen their beliefs about Allah and religion in general, through reading and listening to the Qur'an. The sanctification of the Qur'an is necessary for Muslim families. The Qur'an is written in the Arabic language. Even if one does not speak Arabic, they will still attempt to listen to and read the verses. The children are also taught to read it. Fatima sets time aside specifically to study the Qur'an in Arabic. As mentioned earlier, she said, "they take classes on Skype. Qur'an. I think for 3-4 years he is teaching them on Qur'an." When I asked her why children are taught in Arabic if they speak only Urdu and English, she said, "It is in Arabic, but they read, the guy starts teaching in Arabic." She means that although the Qur'an can be translated and studied in English and Urdu, studying it in Arabic, in its pure form, is critical because of its cultural significance. She explains that it can be translated as well but it should be learned in Arabic first. When I visited the family, the children were studying Qur'an online in Arabic. The

Islamic school also encourages this practice by only teaching the book in Arabic.

The Qur'an presents families with many morals, practices, and stories that help guide family life. It is another method of keeping children to true Muslim values as they further their knowledge surrounding religion. Aisha does not speak Arabic. When I did the home visit, I heard an audio recording of the Qur'an in the living room. By listening to the Qur'an, Muslim people find comfort and believe it blesses their environment. It is imperative for Qur'an to be present in Muslim homes. When I asked Aisha about her values in general, she said, " yeah, value the hijab, pray Qur'an, ... learn Qur'an." Also, when I asked her the best way to teach her children, she said, "in Qur'an and English and my language." She explains how important it is for Muslim children to be raised under guidance of Islam and religious practice. Sara mentioned the value of reading the book as well. "My values were still the same, you know, all religious... reading Qur'an."

Friday is the holy day for Muslims and devotees intensify their religious practices on Fridays. When I asked Sara about her family's activities on Friday, she said, "they have Qur'an lessons, but I don't bring mine, because she already goes to full-time school."

Sara understands that the Muslim community also encourages their people to read the Qur'an. For example, "I just started with another group of going to the mosque, or going to someone's house for one hour to read Qur'an." As Muslims, we call these meetings alhalaqa, meaning, 'the circle.' She said, "As a halaqa... yeah." Throughout Muslim history, alhalaqa has been important in studying the rules of Qur'an, for young and old people alike. This gathering allows for honest discussion between the young, the old and the religious leaders. Teaching children to read Qur'an is important, too. Sara says, " but most important is Qur'an... her reading Qur'an and being able to understand it is important." I had similar experiences in the

KSA as the immigrants do in the U.S. My friends and I attended alhalaqa and discussed religious topics. Despite different living situations, these group get-togethers allow Muslim people to maintain the religious beliefs and keep their beliefs strong.

When I asked Sara if her children earned money in some way, her answer was, “she has for doing things, like for memorizing Qur’an, or finishing prayer.” This further supports the idea that Muslim families wish to plant the seed of faith allowing for strong beliefs in Allah and Islam to flourish one day through religious practices. “Yeah, religion, I want them to be how I raised them, a little bit better... if I can ... like, make sure, for example, like, being here in the U.S. It is a little bit harder because they’re around. The families are strong believers and they are proud of their religion. With religious practice and ritual, they maintain their beliefs, teach their children, and raise them with encouragement to participate in these same practices. This is exemplified through the ritual of going to the mosque to pray together, especially during Ramadan, as a way to partake in faith together.

The Five Pillars of Islam

There are five pillars of Islam. The first is a Muslim’s profession of faith, or shahada; the second is ritual prayer, or salah. Thirdly, obligatory charity, or zakah. The fourth pillar is fasting, or sawm and the last is pilgrimage, or hajj. The first pillar, the shahada, is the Muslims’ profession of faith, and the first of the five pillars of Islam. The word shahada in Arabic means ‘testimony.’ It is simply the proclamation of faith in the word of Allah. The second pillar, the prayer, or salah, is daily ritual prayer (Hitchcock, 2005).

Prayer, Salah

Muslims practice salah five times a day, and they attempt to maintain it as often as possible in efforts to teach the value of prayer to their children as well. Muslim immigrant

families teach their children how to pray at home or at the mosque. When I asked Aisha about prayer, she said, “we not talking...we pray together.” The prayer is both important to them and valuable. When I asked about her family’s values, she mentioned “pray.” The second home visit with her took place at the mosque on Friday because she volunteers to get the place ready for Friday prayers. “I clean, I prepare for salah, just one day, Friday... At the other mosque Saturday.” I noticed that even though she is busy and responsible for her children and the home, she has time allocated for worship through volunteering at the mosque to help Muslim people.

When I asked about her activities at the mosque, Sara from Egypt replied, “After Maghrib prayer. So they’ll pray Maghrib, and prayer and between Maghrib and Isha.” She understands the significance of practicing prayer at the predetermined times regardless of the daily chaos of having a family. Also, when I talked with her about raising her children, she said, “whether it’s prayer, you know, organization skills, how to eat correctly. ” The children are very invested in learning salah, too, even though they are very young. Sara talked about her daughter saying “You know, one time, she forgot a prayer and it was very late at night and I told her it’s okay, you’re young. She cried.”

Teaching children how to pray can be passed down through generations. For example, Sara said, “I remember though, my growing up, it was a must at home, and that’s how we stuck to prayer. Like, my father, would wake us up in the morning. We’d prayer together jama’ah, knowing that you get more ... praying in jama’ah than just by your person, so that was a very good thing.”

Sara’s parents valued the importance of praying as a group. Sara’s family taught her to pray by using jama’ah, which involves praying together as one group. These practices of jama’ah in the home are no longer often practiced in family homes. The act of prayer, however, is still

held in high esteem and maintained in most Muslim homes. When I asked Sara about religion and prayer in her family, she said, “it’s very important.” Each family uses different religious practices to continue passing down their beliefs to their children. Her parents’ generation used jama’ah as a practice to teach prayer to their children and to encourage them to want to pray. Yet one generation later, she does not use jama’ah, though she continues to teach her children to pray through other ways. In essence, the fundamental beliefs are passed down, but the rituals themselves have changed between generations.

Novel and current ways Muslim people teach their children to pray include going to the mosque together on Friday. When I asked Sara about going to the mosque on Friday, she said, “Yes. So, on Fridays, if my husband’s here, we’ll take them and go, on Friday nights. We go to the gathering.” This comment captures the relationship between prayer, the mosque, and family gatherings.

In the KSA, jama’ah prayer outside of the home is of great value, and Allah commands people to do it except for the groups of people who are excused. In the past, the act of going to the mosque was of great value but people now pray mostly at home individually. Many religious practices have faded with time as people have grown, changed, and evolved but the act of prayer itself has not changed.

When I did home visits with Fatima, her daughter was reciting her prayers in front of her mother but before praying she asked her mother about the process of praying. Fatima tries to maintain the family’s beliefs, but she has unique thoughts about prayer. When I asked her about the way religion has influenced the raising of her children, she said, “raising children, yeah, I try to be religious, but, I, myself, am not.”

Fatima is trying to describe her personal stance on religion. She doesn’t take religious

practices for herself as seriously as some Muslims, but she is at peace with this and with herself. Even though her beliefs are not traditional, she explains that her daughters seem to enjoy the ritual of prayer: “Yeah, Nur is offering prayer, I’m not that particular, but she is. She tries to offer one. And Sunya offers one.” Despite the fact that Fatima grew up in a religious environment, she did not inherit this impetus to pray. Even so, she allows her children to take part in these practices. This is the birth of a new fund of knowledge created by a new generation without the help of the prior generation. She said, “Yeah, my father, and I, in my whole life I was born, and raised in Pakistan. My father was very religious, a very pious person... So he goes to the mosque.”

When asked if Fatima wanted to go to the mosque with her children, she said, “over here I didn’t find time. From July, maybe 2 or 3 times. But I want to go.” This response exhibits the fact that she has faith and believes in Allah. To Fatima, going to mosque does not define religion or faith, so she doesn’t partake in the religious practices, but encourages her children to partake in them. She focuses more on the beliefs than the practices. She also recognizes that certain times and circumstances throughout her life have drawn her into religion more than other times. “Yeah, now, sometimes, there are phases in life, you feel that inside, I feel connection with Allah, so,... Yeah. And, so, when we pray, it’s like we communicate with Allah and he asks from him everything, so, I feel like that I can follow this, and I’m trying. Let’s see.”

In the KSA, the concept of religion is often compulsory and isolated because traditions and customs intertwine with prayer and Allah himself instead of focusing on the purity of faith. Faith is muddled with practice, rituals and prayer. The two become married though they are different things. When I came to the U.S., surrounded by a greater variety of religion-practicing people, Muslim or not, my waters cleared.

There are Muslim people who believe it is not a requirement to carry out all of the practices, but they still strongly believe in Allah. When I asked Fatima about going to the mosque on Friday, she said, “I don’t, to be honest, I didn’t get a chance to go there, because I have my kids and they are too young. “In Islam and according to the Qu’ran, it is better for a woman to pray at her own house than to go to the mosque to pray. Yet, the Muslim women find value in congregating. To meet at the mosque means to nurture their Islamic community and to allow them to get to know and help each other. I have noticed as well, that my Muslim friends in the U.S. enjoy meeting at the mosque to get to know one another.

Another motivation for going to the mosque as opposed to praying at home is the desire to model the act of attending mosque and reciting the prayers for their children. Through the Muslims traditions backpack, children mentioned that they pray with their family at the mosque: “we go to the mosque with my brother and my father...” By taking children to the mosque, Muslim families try to maintain their religious practices as well as accustom their children to the practices. The prayer ritual, which is over 1,400 years old, is repeated five times a day. For Muslims, prayer affects the soul, the mind, and the body during worship. They believe that prayer will refresh the lines of communication with Allah. Muslims do not pray for the benefit of Allah. In fact, Allah does not need human religious practices, including prayer. Muslims pray because they believe as Allah has told them to pray means to obtain benefits through prayer. It is possible for Muslims to pray anywhere, but it is best to pray in a group at the mosque, particularly on Fridays (Hitchcock, 2005).

The prophet Muhammad asked parents to teach children how to pray when they reach seven years of age. Islam teaches Muslim people that it is important to have scheduled prayer sessions. Praying accomplishes many things; through prayer, they can heal their heart and

sicknesses, they can acquire forgiveness when they have sinned, they can share with others, and create a stronger relationship with Allah (Ibn-kather).

Compulsory Charity, Zakah

The third pillar of Islam, compulsory charity, is called zakah. Zakah is required of every financially stable Muslim. Giving zakah to the underprivileged is a part of a Muslim's character and it is considered an Islamic practice. Through zakah, Islam encourages the sharing of wealth with others while still supporting that people should stand on their own and become supportive members of the community in return. In Islam, wealth is considered to be a gift from Allah, and it is he who provides it to a person. That person, in turn, is to allocate a portion of it for the poor. In that way, it is understood that the poor have a right to one's wealth. The goal of zakah is to remind people that everything they have belongs to Allah (Hitchcock, 2005).

The families I interviewed all mentioned the zakah. "Yeah, Ramadan and zakah." That was Aisha's answer when I asked her about what values she wanted to teach her children. Through the discussion of Muslim traditions with the children from the backpack, they spoke about their religious practices and Eid, and one mentioned, "we give zakat, I read Qur'an, too." I was amazed to read and hear that children at such a young age understood the purpose and meaning of zakah. As a child in the KSA, I vaguely knew about zakah but it was never a fundamental practice. I attribute this discrepancy in charity to the fact that these families came to America as immigrants. They were supported and built on the kindness of others, on the concept of zakah. Therefore once stable, they too build up other Muslims in their community through this practice. When the parents model this charity practice such as zakah, the children learn to maintain the practice as well and eventually grow to realize the significance of doing the zakah.

Fasting, Saum

The fourth pillar of Islam is fasting during Ramadan, a holy month for Muslims. Ramadan is a month out of the year of fasting, prayer, reading Qur'an, and zakah in depth. During Ramadan, Allah gives Muslim people a chance at forgiveness and an opportunity to refresh communication with him. During Ramadan, all of the religious practices are heightened and worship is augmented (Hitchcock, 2005).

Family members and friends also make stronger efforts to communicate and gather during Ramadan. Ramadan is known as the month of mercy, asking the Muslim people to work hard to get closer to Allah and to ask for forgiveness. The most important practice during Ramadan is fasting, and it's considered to be a type of worship as well. Fasting is a requirement from Allah, but there are some exceptions, such as the elderly, the hospitalized, travelers, and some young people.

Allah requires fasting for al taqwa. Al taqwa means obedience to Allah and the prophet Muhammad and to do as Allah asks so we may be forgiven our sins. Fasting is also a method of purifying the self as well as an act of self-discipline. It can be a good way to become healthier, as the prophet Muhammad said in a Hadith, "if you fast, you will be healthier."

Through fasting, the body strengthens. Fasting can push one to have a better life, free of impurities. A healthier body also allows for the conduct of religious practices at a more powerful level (Ibn-saddi, Ibn-katheer).

The families I interviewed emphasize to their children how important it is to fast during Ramadan, even if it is only part of the time. Sara places values in fasting. "My values were...fasting." She still believes in the practice and even though her daughter is still young, she plans to teach her once she is old enough to understand its meaning.

It goes really well with what our religion says, you know, teach them at 7... and

then they expect from them to do at 10, and if you start that way, it, it helps. It gonna help them when they get older. When I discussed Ramadan from the backpack with children, most of them mentioned that they try to fast, but only part-time, because it is hard for them to have that discipline.

When I asked Aisha about fasting and Ramadan, she said, “oh, my kids are all fasting. But my younger one is not. She’s a kid. Meganae and Shokran, no. And Hamdi and Sofia they practice. They have to practice. They ask when are they going to do it.” The excitement the family members feel about fasting is palpable. The children accept fasting as a must in their religious routine. It is easy for them to accept it and understand why because they are taught from a young age the significance of fasting during Ramadan.

Fatima view religious practices differently. Even though she mentioned that she grew up in Pakistan with her family and a father that was very pious, to my surprise, she does not maintain those practices. Her faith is still strong. She explains,

Yeah, Ramadan, we try to get up because I am personally not following religion, but my parents are very religious. So, in my mind, I used to get up early in the morning, first, ... and in our mind, they know this is our culture and this is our religion.. Although I’m not fasting after marriage. Because of the gyn-ob condition. It is not practical.

I furthered our discussion and asked her how important religion is in her own family. She said, “I think it is very important because Islam is a very peaceful religion.” Her faith in Islam is more broadly defined, instead of being tied to a particular religious practice. She describes what she believes about Islam, and how, for her, it is about what Muslims have

in their hearts. She said,

It means peace. Salaam. So, in my opinion, religion is not weird, it is not part of your mustache, it is in your heart. Muhammad said this, it is in you. Neyya. It is, so the beginning of peace in inside. If Neyya is there, everything is fine. And if your Neyya is good enough, you can do good. At least we can try.

Mustaches and beards are external physical marks of being religious for Muslim men, but Fatima doesn't believe that external physical signs correlate with how religious you are in your heart. Instead, she believes that if your intent is good, then all will be well. Her strong beliefs come from what the prophet Muhammad said. This is consistent with my experience. I came from a conservative family and then my understanding of the words of the prophet broadened when I came to the U.S., like Fatima.

Despite Islam prescribing certain behaviors and ways to dress in order to be religious, Islam isn't about what you look like (Albukhari). Islam is about what you are on the inside. This is what Fatima was trying to break down by mentioning the mustache, Neyya, and Islam being in your heart. When I came to the U.S. I believed that if you had good intentions, then you would be fine. It did not matter how you looked, it was rather, the intentions in your being that mattered.

The topics chosen for the backpack stories helped me to understand more about the religious practices of each family, especially during Ramadan. Ahmad mentioned "I don't fast yet, but my older brother and my older sister do fast." This further elucidates how Muslim families teach their children to fast. Samera, a Mexican-American married to a Muslim Yemeni man, mentioned through the backpack how she helped her children learn to fast, "I try my best to wake Hassan up for Sahur, so he can have a full experience of what fasting during Ramadan is

like, but he is still young.”

Sahur is the meal before the Imsak and that is when people stop eating. Sahur is not a requirement but rather a recommendation from the prophet Muhammad. Prophet Muhammad asserted that practicing Sahur brings blessings. Sahur is not a requirement, but, instead, it's a Sunna, which means, a way to follow Muhammad (Ibn-katheer). Islam has two sets of rules for people to follow: the Qur'an and the Sunna. Sahur is considered Sunna, because it is not demanded by Allah but something that Muhammad always did and something Muslim people should practice. Some Muslim people try to follow the Sunna in addition to the Qur'an. Samera really tried to wake her son up to do the religious practices, even though he is young, so he could learn. She also tried to teach Hassan how important it is to maintain their religious practices.

During Ramadan, Muslim people are united on the notion that religious practices are to be done, but use different rituals and celebrations. Samera comments, “it was fun to compare how we celebrate Ramadan at our home and also here in America. For us in America during Ramadan, we decorate our home with colorful lanterns and hang them.”

People seem to have different rituals for celebrating Ramadan in different countries. I learned from Sara that in Egypt, Fanos, the hanging of the lantern, is considered the first ritual during Ramadan and children get ready to walk through the town with them. Most houses have a lantern to celebrate Ramadan. The families and friends gather to greet each other. In Saudi Arabia, people rely on the news from social media. Scholars travel to the desert and await the arrival of the first crescent in the sky. They share this with government and this is when Ramadan can officially begin. People also greet each other using different words or expressions. For example, “Ramadan Mubarak” and “Happy New Ramadan” are popular greetings. Also, the

prophet Muhammad started eating a date to begin iftar, the feast. People consider this to be Sunna as well. So people follow his commitment by breaking their fast with a date, and then with water. One student wrote “we eat dates in Ramadan.” With this tradition in mind, I gave all the families a date as a part of our shared culture and the families were pleased, as was I.

Ramadan traditions around the world are different, but the traditions all have a shared goal: to celebrate Ramadan. Some people enjoy the iftar at home or at a friend’s home. One student notes, “I go to my uncle’s house when he invites us to iftar. We eat and play together.” Ramadan fuses concepts of respect, communication with family members, family gatherings, and prayers. Samera mentioned a different Ramadan ritual, “celebration of Ramadan means special clothing, traditional food, many memories with family.” Ramadan means different things to different people but the soul remains the same. In discussing the backpacks with the children, I found one thing in common, they all loved talking about Ramadan and fasting, even when our backpacks were on a different topic. Each one has a different type of practice at home but they all do agree, however, about family gathering, iftar, and the importance of the special prayer during Ramadan.

Altaraweesh is a special prayer recited during Ramadan. It also is not a requirement. It is considered a Sunna. Altaraweesh means rest and relaxation. The history of Altaraweesh comes from the last year of the prophet’s life. He came out one night and prayed Altaraweesh. That night, others joined him. In the following nights, word spread and more people joined and prayed with him. Because the prophet Muhammad practiced this special ritual, it is considered a Sunna (Albukhari).

During the discussion of the backpack, only one boy mentioned Altaraweesh. I was surprised because so many of the families were vigilant in teaching their children strong and

traditional faith. The boy mentioned other rituals as part of the backpack discussion: “My father and my brother went to the masjid for Isha prayer.” However, Ali, a Pakistani-American, wrote about the backpack, “we spend most of our time at the local masjid for iftar and night prayer.” By praying at the mosque, the masjid, Muslim people are able to get more involved with the community there. It is a chance for them to get to know each other and for their children to get to know each other as well. Samera explains that, “this is an opportunity for my kids to be more involved with Muslims and they can see what other kids do during Ramadan... Hassan gets mostly excited with playing with children and the masjid and the food.”

Furthermore, it is clear that most Muslim communities maintain core religious practices but through the use of different rituals. Regardless, all of the rituals aim to cultivate strong believers. Samera encourages her children to be more involved with the Muslim community. Parents teach their children to pray by practicing at home and by going to the mosque to congregate. Sara says, “this related to my life because my mom: also practices praying with me. We go to the mosque with my brother and father.. This relates to my life because I also pray on a rug.” She and the other families assert the importance of teaching their children to develop and maintain prayer because it is the second pillar of Islam.

After celebrating Ramadan, people also celebrate Eid as a holiday, too. During the year, Muslims celebrate Ramadan, Eid Al Iftar, and Eid Al A'dha. They celebrate Eid Al Iftar because it is a gift from Allah after a whole month of fasting and getting closer to Allah. It is a happy holiday because people celebrate by exchanging gifts and children get money from parents and friends. Families gather and renew their relationships. Meeting together fosters a sense of sodality. It is especially important for the Eid prayer, which is considered an important reason for Muslim people to gather. Muslim people thank Allah because they have finished fasting and

hope that Allah has accepted their gift of fast (Ibn_Katheer).

The families I visited mentioned that Eid is important to them and they try to change their routines by celebrating with their children and friends. Most Muslims around the world agree to celebrate Eid by praying, but after that, they are free to celebrate with their community in any way they wish. When I asked Fatima about celebrating Eid, she said, “On Eid I never went there because I have some complications... In Birmingham on Eid we go there and on Ramadan.” She tries to maintain the celebration of Eid. Sara, on the other hand, celebrates Eid by going to pray:

Oh, yes, that makes your child feel a part of the community? Yes, for sure. So again, like, the school, and going to mosque, during Eid, or Ramadan.

Through discussion with the children, I learned that different Muslims have different activities for the holiday. For example, some of them go to the park, play games, visit their grandparents, or use money from their parents to buy toys. One of the boys said, “My sisters wear henna. In Eid, my mom gives us gifts.” All these customs are related to faith. Muslim people maintain these customs so they can teach their how rewarding it can be to maintain their faith and to love Allah.

AL Hajj

The last pillar of Islam is the hajj, or pilgrimage. The hajj is the fifth of the fundamental Muslim practices. Pilgrimage is made to the kaaba, located in the sacred city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. It is considered to be the house of Allah. The prophet Abraham built it for the worship of Allah. Allah rewarded him by attributing the house to himself. He honored it by making it a devotional epicenter, which all Muslims face when they pray. Pilgrimage is considered a particularly meritorious activity. It serves as penance, forgiveness for sins, devotion, and intense spirituality. The pilgrimage rite begins a few months after Ramadan on the 8th day of the last month and ends

on the 13th day. Mecca is the center toward which the Muslims are supposed to meet once a year to refresh themselves. This supports the belief that all Muslims are equal and deserve the love and sympathy of others. Most Muslim people want to do the hajj, but the pillar is not a requirement if people cannot get to Mecca (Hitchcock, 2005).

The families tried to teach their children about the hajj. Ali wrote, “ next story relates on my life because I really want to do hajj. But my father want to make hajj with my grandmother.” When the family dreams of going to Mecca and bolstering their faith, children notice, and in turn, are encouraged to strive for such an endeavor in their future. Muslims also celebrate the second Eid after Hajj called Eid Al A’ dha. Eid Al A’ dha is celebrated to mark the completion of the hajj, and the hope that Allah will accept this profession of faith. Eid Al A’ dha involves the same rituals as Eid al-fitr, except on Eid al-adha people get closer to Allah by sacrificing a sheep and dividing it among family members first, and then to the poor.

Apart from hajj, the minor pilgrimage, or umrah, is undertaken by Muslims during the year. It’s considered a requirement but the same exceptions exist. Alfajir Islamic School teaches children the details of hajj. The school invited me to learn about their religious activities and practices. They ask children to do the hajj practices at school, and send home lessons with their parents encouraging discussion about Eid and hajj.

Veil, Alhijab

Even as Muslims follow the rules of Qur’an and Sunna, they often dispute interpretations and explanations of the guidelines. The topic of the hijab is an area where Muslims vastly differ. The Qur’an states that Allah has imposed the hijab onto women (Ibn-katheer). Religious practices, however, are often embedded into everyday life, becoming cultural traditions rather than religious ritual. For example, when I did a home visit with Aisha, I

noticed that she and her daughters all wore the hijab at home and did not take it off. I asked her why they wore the hijab and she said, “well, because I like it....yeah, we like it.” I also tried to press for any religious reasons introducing the fact that Muslim women can take it off at home if there are no strangers. She responded, “I know, but some people they like it like that.” I asked her if this sentiment came from Somali culture, and she responded, “yeah, all the people they stay like this.”

In Saudi Arabia, there are cultural discrepancies from region to region. Each subculture values the concept of the hijab differently. It is dependent on their thinking and the environment they grew up in. Some of them believe to cover their face completely, neqab, is an absolute must while others honor the ritual simply by wearing hijab. It is cultural preference rooted in experience.

From my observations in the classroom, I noticed that the girls from Somalia wear the hijab. The hijab is a requirement for a girl when she starts to menstruate, but the Somali girls I saw were in second grade. This is another point that indicates the hijab’s importance as a cultural practice. The hijab may have been taken from religious practices but over time morphed into a tradition.

Sara told a different story about the hijab, when I asked her about her experience as a Muslim in the US, she said, “hijab, yeah, being Muslim, I had no problems.” The story of her hijab begins with a request from her Egyptian father, “but putting the hijab on was difficult for me, growing up, and then I didn’t ...Because I didn’t want to look different in school.” Some beliefs depend on circumstance. One’s environment can be a potent dictator. Her parents urged her to wear a hijab,

Your thinking is different. And so I refused to put it on. My father was not happy

with that. For long time, we always had argument about hijab, and the way I dressed...yeah, he wanted me to wear it so much we always had, you know, conflicts, together.

In her youth, she was not convinced that wearing a hijab was right for her, but her father convinced her eventually. From then on, she has worn it, and cites the following reason,

And, so he came to a point, when I was 18, he was like, you have to put it on, this is not right, you know, I'm taking zenoub for you, all this stuff. And so I put it on at that time, and alhamdulillah.

Some Muslims hold multiple understandings of the Qur'an due to the many varying explanations of Qur'an. Her father believed that without the hijab, she was committing a serious sin against her father. He was responsible for her behavior and Allah would therefore punish him. This made him feel like a sinner. There are Muslims who feel that they must be responsible for their children's behavior. This is a particularly heavy notion with regards to the hijab. The mistakes, the sins of the children, will become the sins of the parent, eliciting punishment from Allah for not raising them properly. Though this is a common belief, in the Qur'an, where it states that no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another's burden (Ibn-katheer).

As mentioned before, Muslim people follow different religious leaders, each of whom has their own interpretations. New concepts in the religion have also sprouted in smaller communities based on the Quranic interpretation of the local religious leaders. These local and cultural interpretations may start off simply as traditions and customs, but years later become religious practices. It is the people who sanctify those practices.

The last week of backpack discussions with students, I noticed that Hala from Pakistan was wearing a hijab the whole time. When I went to her home, she donned the hijab

there as well. I asked her mother about that, and she explained “ she, it’s her option. Sometimes she takes it, sometimes she’s not. I didn’t say her take it, no take it. It up to her.”

Even though Fatima’s mother did not insist or even encourage the wearing of the hijab, Fatima allows her children a chance to maintain religious practices in their own way. I met Fatima several times at school where she wore a hijab the Pakistani way (loosely tied with her hair falling out and paired with a simple punjabi). When I did the last home visit, I was surprised to see her wearing the hijab again. When I inquired, she said “ yeah, yeah, because it’s, like, what I feel like.” She mentioned she was praying and keeping her faith, “offer us prayer. So I want to keep my faith. And nowadays, I’m covering my head.” I asked her why she suddenly decided to wear the hijab regularly, and she responded, “for religion”. She expands: “I took the scarf regularly before I got married. But then I moved and now I feel it from inside.” Fatima understands that she can maintain her beliefs not only through her religious practices, but also through her faith, which she believes comes from within her. The hijab has no bearing this. She wears it when she feels an inclination to do so. “Actually, when I came here, I was, I was used to wear this, and then, yes, you know what, from my point of view, wearing hijab, I mean, it’s a want inside. If you, feel from inside.”

People change their convictions for different reasons: a different culture, the society they live in, different beliefs, different generations, a new environment, familial obligation, or simply a day-to-day change in motivation. People follow the requirements of religious practices from the Qur’an and the Sunna because they believe in it. But with the integration of new customs and traditions with Islam, there is confusion between what is written and what is decided by local people. This connects with my personal experience. When I was a child, my mother forced me to wear a hijab and I was satisfied with this because I was naive and this was what was expected.

But now, I will not force my daughter to wear it. In Saudi Arabia, the climate is changing and some people are becoming more open and accepting of women without a hijab. Convictions are changing and each generation is bringing new challenges and experiences. We must rise to these challenges and learn to grow from them.

Discussion

Moll (2005) describes how cultural experiences and resources mediate the development of thinking. With my data, I learned that when subjected to a different environment, new funds of knowledge are often created. On the other hand, some funds of knowledge disappear. Islam contributed to the funds of knowledge of the families as a well from which the children draw to mediate their development of thinking. I have created new funds of knowledge for myself and my family from my experience attaining a doctorate in the U.S. I now want to teach my children the significance of higher education. I will try to encourage them to strive for knowledge and to pass this hunger down to future generations.

Vygotsky (1978) explains the significance of interactions with adults, tutors, and community. He believes that these variables affect a child's cognition and learning. This is precisely what happened for the families I met. They aim to teach their children through religious practices, language, respect, and discipline through the interaction with like-minded community members and with their families. The significance of family relationships is illustrated by their dedication to gathering and connecting with all members of the family including those abroad for they consider it to be a command from Allah. Because of that, they try to be closer as one family, to maintain their relationship, as well as the command from Allah.

Vygotsky (1962) claims that language and thought are separate systems, explaining that by interacting with adults, children will learn. All of the interviewees are Muslims but they do

not all speak Arabic. They attempt to learn Arabic in order to read the Quran and understand the thoughts it presents as the holy book of Islam. The Qu'ran represents thought and Arabic, the language that Vygotsky refers to. In order to delve into these thoughts presented in the book, language is an absolute must. Without knowing Arabic, its subtleties, colloquialisms, and connotations, the Qu'ran will be understood superficially. Here language and thought are not separate at all but instead dependent on one another for a more whole immersion into being a Muslim.

When my children and I were together in the U.S., I did not care about maintaining our home language because I knew they would learn Arabic when they returned home. I wanted them to immerse in the English language. If I kept Arabic out, then even at home, they would think in English. The outside communities and the American culture would affect the children's language acquisition more than the language spoken in the home. This was where the heavy-duty learning would take place. Even if a child is exposed to their native language on a daily basis at home, they often become comfortable with the language they hear outside of the home. They wish to normalize themselves, to become Americans and so they begin speaking in English, broken at first, and acting American.

In my data, the children speak English all of the time, both at home and outside of it. When in a new community as an immigrant, we wish to blend in and not stand out. So like the hijab Sara did not wish to wear for fear of looking too different, the children do not wish to speak their native tongue so they do not sound too different. They do not know how to integrate both parts of their identity, manifested through language, so they choose just one and cling to that.

When my son returned to Saudi Arabia at the age of seven, after three years of living in the U.S., he found himself in the same dilemma he faced as a small child. Who was he now?

Everyone spoke Arabic, a language he no longer understood. He felt broken, a stranger in what was supposed to be his “home.” So he forced out the English language and learned Arabic. Was it possible for him to have kept both languages if he was kept away from the community? An open question for further research could look at whether there are students who are born here in the U.S. who predominantly speak their home language instead of English because of the lack of interactions with people outside their home.

If a fund of knowledge is lost, such as a language, can it be found again or passed on any longer? How should it be nurtured in the first place so that it is never lost? Aisha’s and Fatima’s families try to maintain their home language. Aisha wants the children to speak Somali but at the same time she does not use tools such as books, music, and storytelling to transmit it to her children. She does speak with them in her language. This, to me, foreshadows the loss of their home language in the future. If they perhaps had lived in a city with a Somali Islamic school in town, they may have learned the Qu’ran in Somali instead of Arabic, providing them with a greater reason to speak their language. Fatima also tries to maintain her home language, but uses books to encourage her children to speak and use their native language. Both of them want to learn Arabic because it is the language in which they prefer to read the Quran. I believe they take more interest in Arabic because it is not just a language but a part of their religion.

The families chose Alfajir Islamic school because it teaches students using an Islamic curriculum that also amalgamates the Arabic language into the learning of the Quran. This is why they aim to learn Arabic more than their home language because it is the language of the Quran and when they recite prayer and worship, they must do so in Arabic.

Vygotsky (1978) believes that sharing experiences, language, and activities helps one to understand new knowledge and memories. In addition, Bronfenbrenner (1979) theorizes that

learning comes from social relationships and interactions with others. He asserts that learning within different organizations, such as home, school and community, affects the child. Raising children to respect other cultures and to believe in equality is a requirement. By teaching the significance of respect, the families are also following Allah's command. With my research, I was able to see why they focused on respect. It was in order for them to pass that understanding to subsequent generations. Sara mentions in the backpack on this topic how when the children learn how to respect then they too will get respected back: "When two people marry, the family become one... A young age." Sara asserts that teaching children to be respectful is important because she expects that they will turn around and treat their parents with respect in the future, and care for their parents as they age. The children could only learn this respect through new interactions and activities in their schools. It is with these experiences, they learn the value of it.

By living in the U.S., I look at people differently. The variety of cultures in the U.S. and life as a student have both expanded my view about equality and how it is important to respect others even though we hold different beliefs and/or religions. I came from KSA with a narrow view because as a woman, my life was limited to what I saw in the society around me. There were not a myriad of cultures to observe and learn from. Opportunities to learn more about people and their cultures, religions, beliefs and practices were few and far between. Moving to the U.S. as a Muslim has been hard for me. I was worried about my children engaging with American culture. I wanted to maintain the same values as did the families I interviewed. But when I saw that the first thing my children and the children of the families learned in school was respect, I began to understand the American outlook a bit better.

Gonzalez (2005) states that throughout her research, she was the person who most needed to learn. I, too, the scholar, became the learner, with these realizations. I wanted my children to

also appreciate the idea of respect. So when I began reading the Qu'ran again, I saw things with a fresh pair of eyes. The most important thing in Islam is respect and it is the real meaning of the religion. Unfortunately, some customs and traditions have distorted the meaning of Islam. Respecting others is a requirement according to the sunna and the Qu'ran and therefore Allah. But what I learned in school and from religious teachers in KSA was quite different: people who are not Muslims are not equal to us. They may present a conflict of interest and so we must keep out distance instead of working to understand them better. Respect never even came into question here. I do not believe that this represents what the Quran actually states. It is quite the exact opposite actually. As a mother, I was happy to raise my children for some time in the U.S. because they learned a value that they otherwise many not have in the KSA.

Maintaining religious beliefs through practice is important for Muslims. I saw the families try to teach their children many of the religious practices they knew because they had faith that by doing that these they were following Allah's command. This was especially critical during Ramadan. All the practices surrounding gatherings during Ramadan offered good opportunities for families to teach children how to be Muslim. Though each family had a different routine of religious practices, they held similar beliefs. They were all rooted in the five pillars of Islam. This explains how people of the same faith can have different concepts about Islam molded by their different experiences and practices, thereby making them a unique Muslim with a unique fund of knowledge. This will impact how they view and study Islam and the Quran. I found the five pillars to be significant in my data analysis.

The topic of the hijab was also based on identity and what it meant for the women to be Muslim. The hijab is considered a command from Allah but because of the many interpretations of the Quran, some Muslim people decide it will be a part of their Muslim identity while others

decide it will not be. For example, when I asked Aisha about wearing a hijab at home with all her daughters, Islam never even came up. She wears it because she is accustomed to it. The two were not related. Fatima strongly believes that Islam is not just a set of religious practices but is full of practices that come from the surrounding culture. When she took off her hijab, she did not change her beliefs or convictions; she still owned and drew from the same funds of knowledge but she just believed that the Neya is more important than the practices itself.

Conclusion

In chapter five, I answered my second question, which deals with the types of funds of knowledge in Muslim families. The findings related to the five main categories of funds of knowledge: the value of education, significance of family relationships, maintaining the home language, the significance of teaching children to respect other cultures, and the significance of maintaining religious beliefs through practices.

Chapter 6: Summary and Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore funds of knowledge in Muslim families and to consider funds of knowledge as a theoretical and practical framework for application in Saudi Arabia. I examined the funds of knowledge of the families as they related to my two core questions: What funds of knowledge are available within the children's Muslim families and what were the factors that influenced the differences in the home visit and backpack story as strategies to reveal funds of knowledge in these families.

Learning about the factors which influenced the differences in the home visit and family story backpacks as ways to explore funds of knowledge helped me to know more about the family situations. This knowledge is very important for the teacher to build supportive relationships with the families. By providing culturally relevant story topics in the backpacks, the students could see themselves and their families in, I was able to build an initial rapport and begin to access the funds of knowledge within their families.

I chose Alfajir Islamic School because it has Muslim immigrant families. This was important for two main reasons: the first being that my goal is to see how funds of knowledge could apply to Saudi Arabia, a predominantly Muslim society. This school's demographics and culture most closely matches that culture out of the schools in southern Arizona; and, secondly, there are not many scholars looking at the funds of knowledge that Muslim immigrants bring to their new country. Being Muslim myself helped me a lot.

Alfajir Islamic School is the only private school in southern Arizona that follows an Islamic curriculum and includes Arabic language instruction. Most of the teachers are Muslims, and the school is an accredited non-profit and recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The school is diverse. Many socioeconomic backgrounds are represented at the school, and just

over two-thirds of the students identify as black, with the remainder identifying as white. In addition to having a rigorous academic curriculum, the school also strives to develop students' personal skills as well, such as respect and social orientation toward others, and how to exist harmoniously in one's community, which are both important aspects of moral character according to Islamic tradition.

I selected qualitative methodology as opposed to quantitative, because it allowed for more flexibility. The data collected was a combination of interviews, observations, and ethnographic data collection strategies, such as field notes. These kinds of data were chosen in order to follow the same framework that Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti used in *Funds of Knowledge*. The way they carried out their studies was appropriate for the context: qualitative methodology works better when talking with families to find their funds of knowledge. Some of the participants worked collaboratively with me, others withdrew their work with me after starting it, and yet others had excuses for why they did not want to participate in the study I was performing in their classroom.

During each of the three or four interviews conducted with each family, the interactions were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. After the data collection, the observations and interviews were analyzed to develop codes. The data were then categorized and coded.

The data from the first question show that the social class affected the strategies of the home visits. I was able to share the identities, trusts, normalities, and relationships with each family. I felt that the home visits were a good way to connect all the funds of knowledge and bring those funds of knowledge back into the school context. Previous studies mention how the teachers were worried about doing home visits. When I began, I was also worried about conducting these home visits, but they were necessary in order for me to collect the data I

needed. The family story backpacks were another resource in finding funds of knowledge. The key things in finding the funds of knowledge with the backpack were how to pick the topics in the backpack for those families. Also, the findings from the backpacks and the student discussions, allowed for the families who did not want to participate in interviews to share their funds of knowledge through their written journal responses through the stories in the backpacks. The backpack strategy was very useful.

I was unable to use a third strategy in my research due to time constraints and the limitations of my study. Zipin (2009) mentioned bringing an artifact from home as a way to bring funds of knowledge into the classroom. In Saudi Arabia, I will be able to use this third strategy of sharing artifacts as a way to uncover dark funds of knowledge, because I will not be limited by the same time constraints as I was during my study.

The second question I wanted to answer was about the funds of knowledge that exist in the Muslim immigrant families. Because I am a Muslim and the families were as well, I was expecting to hear about the role Islam played in their funds of knowledge. The five pillars of Islam were one of the main categories in my findings. I did not expect the families to already be teaching their children the five pillars, because I expected the concepts of the pillars to be too advanced for the first and second grade children. However, I was surprised to find through the discussion with the students, that the school taught them about five pillars and their meaning as a part of their curriculum.

Islam has a number of funds of knowledge already built in, among them a high priority on education, respect of other cultures, strong family ties, and the Arabic language because of the Qur'an. By closely adhering to Islam, families automatically gain these funds of knowledge, and that means Islam itself is considered as a fund of knowledge.

Implications for Future Research

Future researchers should focus on education and try to use funds of knowledge, because funds of knowledge give families a chance to engage with the curriculum and break the wall between their lives and the field of education. People might also find other types of funds of knowledge that are not just connected with education, such as economic and political funds of knowledge. People also need to find other strategies to find funds of knowledge, because not all strategies will work within every context. My study in Al-fajir Islamic school has not yet been applied to the Islamic school curriculum. In future research, I would recommend that researchers use the findings of this study and apply them to an Islamic curriculum in order to help immigrant students. The US has a variety of different cultures, religions, and ethnicities and this allows researchers to discover other types of fund of knowledge coming from these various populations. This helps to further the knowledge of other students to help them in the future as well. Immigrants and refugees around the world would benefit greatly from using their existing funds of knowledge and keeping these for generations to come. Researchers can assist in this process by keeping their knowledge alive through education.

In Saudi Arabia, I believe there are many cultures in different regions. Because the educational system is one curriculum applied to all of the Saudi schools, it makes it easier for me to integrate the concepts of Moll, Gonzalez Amanti and the teachers into the curriculum by training teachers first and by proposing the concepts of funds of knowledge and the goals of the theory. Through this, I can explain the significance of the changes/improvements made.

Strategies need to be tailored to the different cultures of the people whose funds of knowledge are being studied. For example, in Saudi Arabia, the family story backpacks and

show-and-tell (bringing an artifact from home to share with the class) are likely to be successful strategies in that culture, if the home visits are not fruitful in certain subcultures in Saudi Arabia.

The Implication in Saudi Arabia and Vision 2030

The Arab Bureau of Education for The Gulf States, ABEGS, states that in order to improve our education, focusing on the relationship between school, family and community must function as a partnership. Students are to be supported and their skills to be built, surrounded by a positive society and educational institution. Saudi Arabia seeks a huge transition in changing the focus from teacher to the learner further improving confidence, promoting a spirit of creativity, and developing policy and curriculum goals.

Saudi Arabia has long drawn on the funds of knowledge of different nations, in terms of education but the alternative would be to use the funds of knowledge that already exist within the Saudi community. Before the vision 2030, Saudi Arabia struggled with the failure of the education system to provide the economy with skilled and job-ready individuals. The curriculum was limited and traditional. The religious classes were emphasized more than other fundamentals of education. Alhoqail (1999) presents his sentiments on education and argues that the zenith of education can only be achieved through intense study of Islam. This left little room for anything else. Where did the sciences, mathematics, history and arts come into play with this theory? I believe that Alhoqail wrote the beginnings of what may be the implementation of funds of knowledge in Saudi Arabia. He understood that the nation is rooted in Islam and Islam is a fundamental source of knowledge that can not be ignored. What he failed to expand on was how Islam can be honored in many subjects but that the basics needed for progression in the education system should hold priority. It is with these fundamentals that Saudi Arabia can provide its economy with qualified, proficient, and culturally aware workers. I believe that

Vision 2030 attempts to address this very discrepancy. The concepts of funds of knowledge are clearly present within its research but are not clearly delineated. There also might be a lack of knowledge in terms of how to implement the theory on a daily basis.

Alhoqail (1999) and Alzamail (2010) mention how we can bring individual backgrounds into the schools. These unique histories, like those of the immigrants in my study, provide the basis for creating a more culturally evolved and yet thorough curriculum. Saudi Arabia has so many different subcultures and social classes. By understanding a variety of funds of knowledge, we may begin to break some of the walls between these micro-communities. At the same time, students will be offered a chance to know more about the other cultures within their own society. Vision 2030, strengthened with the idea of funds of knowledge, will touch upon the people's needs in the future in more than just education. By constructing the curriculum with the student's funds of knowledge in mind, we can bolster a student's academic achievement and the survival of the Saudi people. This is the reason why I was moved to study the theory of funds of knowledge. I also, did not know about the other cultures in Saudi Arabia and the life they live until I came to the U.S. I realized that throughout my education in the KSA, I was never taught about our rich diversity and the differences between all of the different Saudis united under the nation's flag.

The fifth goal of the Vision's stresses that curriculum development, teaching and evaluation methods are the duty of the ministry of education and are necessary for meeting the labor market's needs. By applying funds of knowledge in Saudi Arabia, I expect we may fill many of the gaps in education and in the economic industries.

The concept of funds of knowledge helped me to understand how to improve and build upon the current education system in the KSA with the Vision 2030 in mind. Gonzalez, Moll and

Amanti (2005) give the educators and teachers an easy yet deeper way to discover the knowledge from the minds of the children. Vygotsky (1978) explains how children maintain their knowledge through engagement with adults and the community. With these interactions, children will have the knowledge they need for life experiences and they will inherit the knowledge they need from these funds. With the light and dark funds of knowledge mentioned by Zipin (2009), I believe that when I conduct my research in Saudi Arabia, I will find both light and dark funds of knowledge as well. These dark funds of knowledge can be used to help solve the society's problems and transform them into light funds of knowledge. In this research, I focused on light funds of knowledge for the security of the families. The questions I asked were from the original interviews the teachers and scholars used in *The Funds of Knowledge*. By connecting this research with the theory of Vision 2030 in the KSA, I am certain that the impact it will have on the educational system will be great.

Saudi Arabia, at this time, has much to improve but through education we can accomplish a lot. The theory of funds of knowledge could help to fill the gap in the educational system. My first goal when I return will be to introduce the goals of the theory of the funds of knowledge and how this theory has had success in many different countries. I will then describe the strategies the scholars used to apply the theory. I will delve into which the strategies work with Saudi system. Because I believe that the home visit is an important manner in which to find funds of knowledge, I will propose some important steps to convince the ministry of education and educated scholars that this is necessary. In addition, I will try to follow the guidelines that the scholars used in the project and train the teachers to apply their theory. The funds of knowledge applied in the classroom works to find a way to integrate the children's lives into school in a very relevant way that can be applied to the curriculum.

Last Words

I believe that each child comes from a different place with different knowledge. Families and parents teach their children how to use the knowledge they attain to survive. As educated scholars and adults, it is our duty to apply this concept of harvesting the knowledge already present in the minds of children. We have to learn from the students themselves before we can teach them and help them grow. If we are to build a strong future for our teachers and children, then it is critical to use their knowledge, gained from different generations, social classes, religions, and heritages. Now is the time for us as educators to discover the knowledge of children and families as the foundation of their future.

Appendix A: Parent Interview Questions

The first home visit is to meet the family, visit their home, and get acquainted.

First Interview (Selected based on family)

SECTION A. Family Structure

1. We would like to know a little about your household:
2. How long have you and your family members lived in Tucson?
3. Where did you live before this home?
4. Where were your parents born? Where were they raised?
5. Do you see them often?
6. How many brothers and sisters do you have? Do you see them often?
7. Do you have relatives in Tucson?

SECTION B. Labor History

Frequently children learn from the work and skills of members of the household. We would therefore like to ask you a few questions concerning your employment and previous work experience that you may have had.

1. What kind of work do you do now?
2. Could you describe the duties and responsibilities of your job?
3. How did you learn the skills necessary for your job?
4. Do your children help you in your job?
5. Please tell us a little about your previous work experience.
6. How did you learn the skills for these jobs?
7. Have your children ever worked with you?
8. Aside from your main employment, do you have any side jobs?
9. Do you work as a volunteer for any kind of organization, religious group, or school organization?

Second Interview (Selected based on family)

SECTION C: Daily and Weekly Activities

There are many other sources besides school for learning. We would like to ask a few questions about your day yesterday. This will help us understand what activities are important.

1. Could you tell me the schedule that you follow on a typical day?
2. Do you have any activities that you engage in on a weekly rather than daily basis, for example, sports activities, religious activities, music lessons, etc.?

SECTION D: Distribution of Household tasks

1. Do you have a garden or animals?

2. Who takes care of the garden? The animals?
3. Who is in charge of maintenance and repair work in the household?
4. Does anyone consult books or instructions to carry out the repairs?
5. Do the children help in these activities?
6. Who does the shopping and cooking for the household?
7. Do the children help?

SECTION E: Language

In this section of the questionnaire we would like to focus on the use of language. At home, in what language do you speak to your child?

1. And your child, in what language does he/she speak to you the majority of the time?
2. Does your child translate for anyone in the family?

Third Interview (Selected based on family)

SECTION F: Parenting

1. Before you became a mother/father, did you have any idea of what it would be like?
2. Is your present experience as a mother/father similar to your previous expectations?
3. What do you find most stressful about being a parent?
4. What do you find most joyful?
5. Do you ever feel you are in need of advice in rearing your children?
6. Where do you go for advice in rearing your children?
7. Do you feel that the way you raise your children is similar to how your friends/relatives raise theirs?
8. What do you feel is the most important thing to consider in raising children?

9. Are you raising your children the way you were raised?
10. What advantages or problems do they have that you didn't?
11. Is it important for you that your child live near his/her relatives? Why?
12. Do you feel that your child learns from his/her relatives and family friends?
13. In what way has your religion influenced the way you raise your children?
14. How important is religion in your family life?

SECTION G: Money

1. Do you ever talk with your child about money?
2. Does he/she get an allowance?
3. What do you give him/her money for?
4. Does he/she earn any money?
5. Do children today view money differently from the way your generation saw it?
6. Do you think this is good or bad?
7. What is your attitude toward money?
8. Do you want your child to have money when he/she grows up?

SECTION H: Religion

1. What religion are you?
2. In what way has your religion influenced the way you raise your children?
3. Does your family attend the mosque together?
4. Pray together?
5. Attend religious activities together?
6. How important is religion in your family life?

SECTION I: Education

1. Do you ever talk to your child about your educational expectations for him/her?
2. What do you like about the school your child attends?
3. How would you improve the school your child attends?
4. What should the school do that it is not now doing?
5. What do you think should be the purpose of bilingual education?
6. Until what grade do you think children should have instruction in_____?
7. How much schooling do you think your child will attain?
8. What occupation do you think he/she will choose?
9. What do YOU want him/her to choose?

SECTION J: Ethnic Identity

1. How is being raised in the U.S. different from being raised in_____?
2. How are the schools different?
3. Do you ever talk to your child about being_____?
4. What do you say to him/her?
5. Do you make it a point to participate in activiteis and events that make your child feel a part of the_____community?
6. Why or why not?

Fourth Interview

1. First of all, I will share my experience or my story.
2. Can you share some of your story, telling how and why you came to Tucson?

3. How would you describe your experience of being a Muslim in the United States? How has it been?
4. How has this experience been for your children? (Being Muslim in the United States)
5. What family practices from your home country have you been able to continue in the United States? What religious practices from your home country have you been able to continue?
6. Has living here supported those family practices? In what ways?

Appendix B: Family Story Backpacks

1. Names

- a. *Little Treasures* by Jacqueline Ogburn
- b. *My Name was Hussein* by Hristo Kyuchukov
- c. *My Name is Sangoel* by Karen Williams, Khadra Mohammed and Catherine Stock

2. The Desert

- a. *Desert Trek* by Marie-Ange Le Rochais
- b. *One Night* by Christina Kessler
- c. *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro* by Jennifer Ward

3. Family

- a. *You and Me Together* by Barbara Kerley
- b. *Yo Soy Muslim* by Mark Gonzales and Mehrdokht Amini
- c. *The Silence in the Mountains* by Liz Rosenberg and Chris K. Soentpiet

4. Ramadan

- a. *A Party at Ramadan* by Asma Mobin-Uddin
- b. *Moon Watchers* by Reza Jalali and Anne Sibley O'Brien
- c. *The White Nights of Ramadan* by Maha Addasi and Ned Gannon

5. Muslim Traditions

- a. *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns* by Hena Khan and Mehrdokht Amini
- b. *Time to Pray* by Maha Addasi and Ned Gannon
- c. *Going to Mecca* by Na'ima B. Robert and Valentina Cavallini
- d. *Deep in the Sahara* by Kelly Cunnane and Hoda Hadadi

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